A Quarterly of New Literature

ACCENT

WALLACE STEVENS:
The Bed of Old John Zeller

WILLIAM MARCH:
It's Your Hard Luck

ERIC RUSSELL BENTLEY: Shavian Drama
WALLACE FOWLIE: Henry Miller
HENRY MILLER: Lautreamont
PAUL BARTLETT: Grilled Windows
JOHN NERBER: Mercator

W. Y. TINDALL
DEAN JEFFRESS
DAVID NEWTON
MARJORIE FARBER

KATHARINE SHATTUCK
HUBERT CREEKMORE
PRISCILLA FOLSOM
JOSEPHINE MILES

ROSEMARY PARIS
DUDLEY FITTS
WELDON KEES
DAVID DAICHES

30 CENTS

AUTUMN, 1944

RANDOM HOUSE *Lifetime Library*

Here, in a form worthy of the distinguished texts, is the best thought of antiquity, the Middle Ages and today. Definitive, inexpensive editions arranged and edited by the greatest authorities in each field.

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST
by Marcel Proust. Complete in a superb two-volume set, boxed, *$5.00.*

STUDIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX
by Havelock Ellis. Complete, unabridged, with case histories. Two volumes, boxed, *$7.50.*

THE COMPLETE GREEK DRAMA
Edited by Whitney J. Oates & Eugene O'Neill, Jr. All the extant tragedies of *Aeschylus, Sophocles* and *Euripides,* and the comedies of *Aristophanes* and *Menander.* Two volumes, boxed, *$6.00.*

THE COMPLETE ROMAN DRAMA
Edited by George E. Duckworth. All the extant comedies of *Plautus* and *Terence* and the tragedies of *Seneca,* in a variety of translations. Two volumes, boxed, *$6.00.*

THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO
The Benjamin Jowett translation. The third and standard edition, complete and unabridged. Two volumes, boxed, *$6.00.*

THE BASIC WORKS OF ARISTOTLE
Edited by Richard McKeon. For the first time in a single volume. *$5.00.*

THE GREEK HISTORIANS
Edited by Francis R. B. Godolphin The complete and unabridged historical works of *Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon* and *Arrian.* Two volumes, boxed, *$6.00*

IDEAL MARRIA
by Th H. Van de Velde. A complete, explicit authoritative work by an internationally famous Du gynecologist. *$7.50.*

GREAT TALES OF TERR AND THE SUPERNATUR
Edited by Herbert A. Wise and Phyllis Fraser. O 1000 pages, 52 complete stories, 42 authors—includ *Kipling, Machen, Woollcott* and *Sayers.* Introduct and notes. *$2.95.*

ADVENTURES IN LIGHT AND COL
by Charles J. Connick. A delightful survey of stain glass windows from the Middle Ages to the present a great craftsman in the art. Illustrated in color. *$12.*

THE WISDOM OF CHINA AND IND
by Lin Yutang. A magnificent 1104-page treasury of wit, the beauty and the wisdom of ageless Asia. *$3*

STOIC AND EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHE
Edited by Whitney J. Oates. The complete ext writings of *Epicurus, Epictetus, Lucretius* and *Mar Aurelius. $3.00.*

COMPLETE WORKS OF EUGENE O'NEI
The 29 published plays of America's greatest playwrig Three volumes, boxed, *$7.50.*

The Complete Poetry and Selec Prose of JOHN DONNE and Complete Poetry of WILLIAM BLA
The texts of the superlative Nonesuch Press Editio all in one volume of 1100 pages. With an introduct by *Professor Robert Silliman Hillyer* of Harvard. *$3*

THE BEDSIDE BOOK FAMOUS AMERICAN STORI
71 stories, complete and unabridged, with biograph notes. 1366 pages, *$3.00.*

THE BEDSIDE BOOK FAMOUS BRITISH STORI
80 stories, complete and unabridged, with biograph notes. 1256 pages, *$3.00.*

THE BASIC WRITINGS ST. THOMAS AQUIN
Edited by Anton C. Pegis. A revised translation, with troduction, notes and index. Two volumes, boxed, *$6*

RANDOM HOUSE, 20 EAST 57th STREET, NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

CONTENTS

Eric Russell Bentley: *The Theory and Practice of Shavian Drama* 5

Paul Bartlett: *Grilled Windows* 19

Wallace Stevens: *The Bed of Old John Zeller* 24
Less and Less Human, O Savage Spirit 24

Weldon Kees: *Four Poems* 25

Hubert Creekmore: *Music in the Rec Hut* 27

W. Y. Tindall: *Felix Culpa* 28
The Section 28
The Fleece 29

Priscilla Folsom: *Child Was* 30

John Nerber: *The Condemned* 31
Mercator 32
The Sea Lying Dead Tonight 33

Katharine Shattuck: *The Beast* 34

David Newton: *Two Songs for Serinette* 40

William March: *It's Your Hard Luck* 41

Dean Jeffress: *Poem* 44

Henry Miller: *Let Us Be Content with Three Little New-Born Elephants* 45

Wallace Fowlie: *Shadow of Doom: an Essay on Henry Miller* 49

Rosemary Paris: *Rehearsal for Invasion* 54

Among Recent Books:
Dudley Fitts: *A Wreath for the Sea* by Robert Fitzgerald 56
David Daiches: *Joseph the Provider* by Thomas Mann 58
Josephine Miles: *Beast in View* by Muriel Rukeyser and *The Golden Mirror* by Marya Zaturenska 60
Marjorie Farber: *The Dangling Man* by Saul Bellow, *Transit* by Anna Seghers, *A Walk in the Sun* by Harry Brown, and *The Firing Squad* by F. C. Weiskopf 61

EDITORS: Kerker Quinn, Charles Shattuck, Allan Holaday.

ASSISTANTS: Charlotte Bruner, Lura Williams, Morton Moskov.

ACCENT: Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois. Published quarterly. Subscription: $1.00 for a year, $1.75 for two years in the United States (elsewhere—$1.25 for a year, $2.00 for two years). Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1940, at the post office at Urbana, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1944, by ACCENT.

STRANGE FRUIT

by Lillian Smith

"Her book is not a promise but an achievement."— MALCOLM COWLEY, *New Republic.* **$2.75**

KARL SHAPIRO

whose *Person, Place and Thing* won him a Guggenheim Fellowship, has a new volume of poems. $2.00

V-LETTER

and other poems

REYNAL & HITCHCOCK

A psychological novel of terrifying suspense

The author of *Stranger on the Highway* has created a story whose tense emotional atmosphere and growing personal conflicts stem from the decay of a class that could not adjust itself to our changing world. $2.50

By H. R. HAYS

Lie Down IN DARKNESS

MARGUERITE YOUNG

in her first volume of poems since *Prismatic Ground* (1937) reaffirms her position as one of America's most important young poets. $2.00

MODERATE FABLE

ACCENT

A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE

Volume 5, Number 1 Autumn, 1944

ERIC RUSSELL BENTLEY:

The Theory and Practice of Shavian Drama

When a few years ago Thomas Mann said that reality is today seen in political terms, he was quickly pounced upon by many acute critics. Yet he was not talking nonsense, and Friedrich Hebbel had applied a comparable insight to the drama almost a century earlier. Hebbel wrote:

> The new drama, if such a thing comes into being, will differ from the Shakespearian drama, which must now be definitely abandoned, in that the dramatic dialectic will be injected not only into the characters but also directly into the idea itself, so that not alone the relation of man to the idea is debated but also the validity of the idea itself.

Hebbel's words bring us to the threshold of Shavian drama.

What is Shaw's theory of the drama? What has he said on the subject? A great deal, almost everyone would be inclined to say. Yet in fact only a very small portion of Shaw's thirty odd volumes is devoted to dramatic criticism and little of that to dramatic theory. From the earliest prefaces to the preface to *Saint Joan* (1924) we find complaints of a lack of seriousness in contemporary theatre and in criticism and we find discussions of censorship and the like, but for more general judgments one must go to two chapters added in 1912 to *The Quintessence of Ibsenism,* to Shaw's Preface to *Three Plays of Brieux,* and to Archibald Henderson's inexhaustible Shaviana. From such sources one can piece together a body of dramatic theory somewhat as follows.

The nineteenth-century theatre, consisting of the rags and tatters of Shakespeare and the cheap new feathers of Eugène Scribe, is decadent. It presents not life but day-dream, not thought but sentiment, not experience but conventional surrogates. Two men—Ibsen and Wagner—have struggled against the tide, and their efforts have been so successful that it can be said: ". . . there is, flatly, no future now for any drama without music except the drama of thought." Receptively, Shaw was probably more moved by Wagner; as a creative artist, however, he was to follow in the footsteps of Ibsen.

For Shaw the quintessence of Ibsen was that he was pre-occupied with morality, and that morality was in Ibsen something to be discussed and worked out, not something given. Morality is not only to do right but to discover what *is* right; immorality is not only the doing of certain things, but the deception of self in refusing to see what should and should not be done. In the drama of fixed morality there is no moral questioning at all. Hence the need of much outward action. We must see the hero in many situations, facing right and facing wrong. He must be put to tests of fire and water. Such is the nature of what Shaw calls "the tomfooleries called action" or, more explicitly, "vulgar attachments, rapacities, generosities, resentments, ambitions, misunderstandings, oddities, and so forth." Once the moral problem is one of sincerity and conscience and not merely a test of one's power to live according to the moral law, outward eventfulness becomes superfluous and therefore vulgar. Shaw denounces "crimes, fights, big legacies, fires, shipwrecks, battles, and thunderbolts" as "mistakes in a play, even when they can be effectively simulated."

Since morality is not given, we do not know who is a villain and who is a hero. This fact is both true to life and dramatically interesting. The villain cannot only be—what he always was—plausible and apparently virtuous. He can actually *be* what most people do think virtuous. This too is true to life, and it is dramatically striking because it establishes between author and audience the unusual, ironic, and Shavian relationship of antagonism. It is true that most of the audience will, after a time at least, make exceptions of themselves and assume that Shaw means everybody else. But Shaw does not mean everybody else, and the irony is redoubled. We must therefore conclude that there is more to the shock-technique of Shavian drama than high spirits or even reformism. Shaw's preaching has aesthetic as well as moral point, for it is the preacher who chides his audience and who must not pretend to sympathize with their faults. When Shaw proposed a drama of ideas he did not mean a drama deprived of all dramatic elements except witty conversation. He meant, in his own words, "the substitution of a forensic technique of recrimination, disillusion, and penetration through ideals to the truth, with a free use of all the rhetorical and lyrical arts of the orator, the preacher, the pleader, and the rhapsodist."

The theory of Shavian drama is, on the negative side, a defence of the drama of discussion and, on the positive side, an assault upon all other drama, for when the artist turns literary critic he always generalizes his personal positions and arraigns all the traditions with which he is not in rapport. Shaw

was not averse to arraigning Shakespeare. The arraignment was partly unashamed self-advertisement, but partly also it was an attempt to establish that non-Shakespearian drama of which Hebbel had spoken, an attempt to weaken the Bardolatry which was hindering a true understanding of Shakespeare as much as it was hampering the efforts of all who tried to make a drama which would be as expressive of our time as Shakespeare had been of his. As objective evaluation Shaw's Shakespeare criticism is unimportant. As polemic, as part of his own theory, it is consistent and significant. If he has ridiculed some plays which had been thought sacrosanct, he called attention to the fascination of some plays, such as *Troilus and Cressida,* which modern critics would later claim to have "discovered"; he observed that *Hamlet* was laudably un-Shakespearian in that here was real moral doubt and questioning of conscience and inner tragedy; he was privately a great Shakespeare fan and in Shakespeare discussion resembles an atheist who in religious discussion turns out to know and relish the Bible more than the godly.

But Shaw's major critical offensive was against the pre-Ibsenite drama of the nineteenth century. The shadow of Scribe darkened the scene. Shaw fumed. He would annihilate this *infame*! If this was technique, he would annihilate technique! Hence his polemics against the "well-made play": "Your plot construction and art of preparation are only tricks of theatrical talent and shifts of moral sterility, not the weapons of dramatic genius." Or again: "The writer who practises the art of Ibsen therefore discards all the old tricks of preparation, catastrophe, dénouement . . . " Once the mode of these polemics is understood, Shaw's disparagement of dramaturgy in his own work can also be understood for the blarney that it is. Shaw boasts of using the comic tricks of the 'sixties in *Arms and the Man*; in *The Devil's Disciple* he declares he has used those of the next generation; what the critics take for brilliance and originality, he explains, consists only of the "tricks and suspenses and thrills and jests" which were "in vogue when I was a boy." How little these remarks describe the Shavian dramaturgy we shall see in a later section of this essay.

What is the gist of Shaw's case against the Shakespearian and the Scribean traditions? It is that both are Romantic. In the Shavian use of the term, Romanticism means hocus-pocus, pretentious and deceptive artifice, the substitution of flattering but unreal and foolish conventions for realities. The theory is that Zola, Ibsen, and Shaw (and perhaps one should add the later Dickens and Samuel Butler) had made it their business to destroy Romanticism by laying bare the realities. Zola made a fine beginning, says Shaw, by trying to replace Romantic or stagey logic with a correct natural history, but unfortunately he formed a Romantic attachment with morbidity. Ibsen made a monumental contribution, but unhappily retained the catastrophic ending in his plays. The natural historian of modern society knows that the real tragedy of Hedda Gablers is precisely that they do not commit suicide. Shaw gives Chekhov some credit for this insight, and emulates his method in *Heartbreak House*. Eugène Brieux he appears to regard as the most thorough-going exponent of "natural history."

This brings us to the positive side of Shaw's dramaturgy. Shaw's theory, I repeat, is not that everything in traditional drama should be scrapped except talk, and then the residue called the New Drama. "Rhetoric, irony, argument, paradox, epigram, parable," he writes, "the re-arrangement of haphazard facts into orderly and intelligent situations: these are both the oldest and the newest arts of the drama." These words include a good deal more than clever or even profound talk. Attention should be paid to the phrase "the re-arrangement of the facts into orderly and intelligent situations" and to the word "parable." The preface to Brieux contains an assertion that drama does not merely photograph nature but attempts a "presentment in parable of the conflict between man's will and his environment: in a word, of problem." This is indeed an old and new theory of drama, old as the Greeks, new as Ibsen who had characterized his leading theme as "the contradiction between effort and capacity, between will and possibility, the tragedy and at the same time comedy of the individual and of mankind."

II

Shaw's defense of a theatre of idea brought him up against both his great bugbears—commercialized art on the one hand and Art for Art's Sake on the other. His teaching is that beauty is a by-product of other activity; that the artist writes out of moral passion (in forms varying from political conviction to religious zeal), not out of love of art; that the pursuit of art for its own sake is a form of self-indulgence as bad as any other sort of sensuality. In the end, the errors of "pure" art and of commercialized art are identical: they both appeal primarily to the senses. True art, on the other hand, is not merely a matter of pleasure. It may be unpleasant. A favorite Shavian metaphor for the function of the arts is that of tooth-pulling. Even if the patient is under gas, the tooth is still pulled.

The history of aesthetics affords more examples of a didactic than of a hedonist view. But Shaw's didacticism takes an unusual turn in its application to the history of the arts. If, as Shaw holds, ideas are a most important part of a work of art, and if, as he also holds, ideas go out of date, it follows that even the best works of art go out of date in some important respects and that the generally held view that great works are in all respects eternal is not shared by Shaw. In the Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans,* Shaw maintains that renewal in the arts means renewal in philosophy, not in anything artistic; that the first great artist who comes along after a renewal gives to the new philosophy full and final form; that subsequent artists, though even more gifted, can do nothing but refine upon the master without matching him. Shaw, whose essential modesty is as disarming as his pose of vanity is disconcerting, assigns to himself the role, not of the master, but of the pioneer, the role of a Marlowe rather than of a Shakepeare. "The whirligig of time will soon bring my audiences to my own point of view," he writes, "and then the next Shakespeare that comes along will turn these petty tentatives of mine into masterpieces final for their epoch."

"Final for their epoch"—even Shakespearean masterpieces are not final beyond that. No one, says Shaw, will ever write a better tragedy than *Lear* or a better opera than *Don Giovanni* or a better music-drama than *The Niblung's Ring;* but just as essential to a play as this aesthetic merit is moral relevance which, if we take a naturalistic and historical view of morals, it loses, or partly loses, in time. Shaw has the courage of his historicism, consistently withstands the view that moral problems do not change, and argues therefore that for us modern literature and music form a Bible surpassing in significance the Hebrew Bible. That is Shaw's challenge to President Hutchins and St. John's College.

Such are Bernard Shaw's expressed opinions on dramatic and artistic matters. What are we to make of it? We have seen that most of his critical prose is polemic and is not therefore to be submitted to the same kind of analysis as a more objective criticism. Even when arguing for science and natural history as against Romanticism and artifice, Shaw writes in a prose that is at once artistic, artful, and artificial. He is a poet of polemics, as Einstein seems to have felt when he compared the movement of Shavian dialogue to Mozart's music. His polemics are therefore the more dangerous, for polemics are nothing but the art of skilled deception. Now a prime device of polemics is the either / or pattern, against which so much has been said in recent times, often by great polemicists. Shaw is a great polemicist in his skilled deployment of antitheses. He always forces upon his opponent an alternative which the opponent never wanted to be confronted with and sometimes did not deserve to be confronted with. Watch how he pushes not only the Scribeans but also the Shakespeareans into a corner! He condemns not merely melodramatic action but apparently all outward action as "tomfoolery." Of course the condemnation has some substance (it is the art of the polemicist to avoid untruths, and exploit half-truths) in that not much of the history of the world can be convincingly represented on the stage. Shaw knows that the stage can only show the effect of history on a few individuals and that it is much better suited to talking than to fighting and doing. That is the true half of this remark. But he loads it with a lie in order to attract attention. He feels that the weakness of the well-made play can only be revealed if all plot-construction is ridiculed. The absurdity of melodrama can only be demonstrated by debunking tragedy. Shaw cannot always resist the temptation to remove the unoffending nose with the offending wart.

We cannot, therefore, feel wholly satisfied with Shaw's contributions to dramatic theory brilliant as some of them are. The terms of the theory are too crude. Technique and plot cannot be isolated from the rest of a work of art in so facile a manner. More explanation would be needed to make the antithesis of romantic logic and natural history convincing. Shaw's criticism, which so many think over-explanatory, and which many assumed to be voluminous, is actually reticent to the point of evasiveness. As his pose of conceit hides a considerable shyness about himself, so his volubility is, among other things, a way of avoiding certain issues, chief among them the aesthetic issues. Shaw

refuses to lecture on dramaturgy on the grounds that he is a practitioner, and of course he is entirely within his rights in this. Many a creative artist would support him. The peculiar thing about Shaw is that we have the impression that he has explained everything—"I am nothing if not explanatory," he once said—but always stops short in personal and aesthetic matters. Hence we can often learn more from an *obiter dictum* of Shaw's than from an extended statement. When for instance in 1934 Shaw defends one of his plays "simply as a play" we wonder what has happened to the didactic criterion. And we learn much about the art of Shaw when we read of his writing his roles for particular actors, of his own histrionic talent, of his interest in actual production. Plays, he remarks casually, can be considered as exhibitions of the art of acting. Of this conception he says: "As I write my plays it is continuously in my mind and very much to my taste."

These are valuable hints, but they remain hints and are never developed into a critical system. Shaw's critical writing is to some extent camouflage. He has himself, consciously or not, spread the notion, recently reiterated in Hesketh Pearson's biography, that he is most interesting as a person, slightly less interesting as a sage, and least interesting as a playwright. Shaw has said that art must be subordinate to other things, and his readers have applied the theory to Shaw. But the Shavian view is that the subordination of art to morals should make the artist better as an artist. To say that beauty and happiness are by-products not to be directly aimed at is to alter our method of attaining beauty and happiness; yet beauty and happiness remain the ultimate goal, even though we reach them by doing something else. And the critic is entitled to judge for himself whether beauty has been attained or not. By no amount of polemic can Shaw evade the aesthetic touchstone. Not one exceptional case only, but all his plays must stand or fall as plays.

III

One or two of Shaw's generalizations about drama do help us to an understanding of his plays. One is that there are only two dramatic characters, the long-haired aesthete and the clown. The statement is naughty, for it is either too vague to be exactly applicable or too dogmatic to be true. Yet it opens the door to an understanding of Shaw's characters, at least the male characters, and the way they are contrasted. A still more pregnant remark is that the drama, though now degenerated to a rant and a situation, began as a dance and a story. Shaw has brought dance back into the drama, not directly, to be sure, but in the lively rhythm of his lines and in the musical, rather than "well-made," structure of his scenes; and, precisely by minimizing plot, he has brought back stories to the stage by way of lengthy narratives.

The well-made play, says Shaw, is built on the scheme: exposition, situation, unravelling. *A Doll's House* is built on the scheme: exposition, situation, discussion. Discussion is the crucial technical innovation which accompanies the changes in outlook which Hebbel was one of the first to be aware of. The Shavian play—everyone agrees—is a discussion play. People sit in their chairs

and talk everything over. The talk is good. And that, according to many, is Shaw.

But, in the first place, Shaw's plays, though more like each other than any one is like a non-Shavian piece, are not cut to one pattern. Indeed his plays are so various, and there are at least thirty important ones, that classification is extremely difficult even on chronological lines. Yet, though Shaw's dramatic career is not so clearly periodized as, say, Ibsen's, certain groupings do suggest themselves. A major break occurred with the First World War. The plays prior to that compose a single group which in turn may be cut in half at about the turn of the century. Dividing the post-war period also in half, we have two main periods, with two subdivisions:

1892-1899	I.	i. *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant,* and *Three Plays for Puritans.*
1901-1912		ii. From *Man and Superman* to *Pygmalion.*
1913-1924	II.	i. From *Heartbreak House* to *Saint Joan.*
1929-1939		ii. From *The Apple Cart* to *In Good King Charles's Golden Days.*

The plays of the 'nineties are chiefly simple inversions of current theatrical patterns, such as Victorian melodrama *(The Devil's Disciple),* the heroic play *(The Man of Destiny, Caesar and Cleopatra),* and Gilbertian comedy *(Arms and the Man, You Never Can Tell).* But from *Man and Superman* (1901-1903) on, Shaw has his own patterns. These are the years of *Getting Married* and *Misalliance,* which are the extreme instances of Shavian discussion drama, of Shaw's toughest dialectical dramas such as *Major Barbara* and *The Doctor's Dilemma* (two of the most original and the best of Shaw's plays), and of his most controlled and delicate fantasies such an *Androcles and the Lion.* If *Fanny's First Play* and *Pygmalion* are, like the early plays, variants on conventional patterns, they are at once subtler and tougher variants than those of the 'nineties.

The play which Shaw was at work on from 1913 to 1916—*Heartbreak House*—marks a departure in technique and mood. The socialist optimism of *Major Barbara* and the Bergsonian optimism of *Man and Superman* are gone. For the current stage of civilization, Shaw finds a metaphor which was still to be with him in 1933: civilization is a ship on the rocks. From now on, most of Shaw's plays were to be fantasias or extravaganzas in which the disappointment of many liberal hopes is announced and the apartness of Shaw from the new generation is implied. Even *Back to Methuselah,* which so anxiously tries to be optimistic, is most impressive in the extravagant satire against Lloyd George and Asquith and in the pathetic tragedy of the elderly gentleman confronted with a new generation. Even *Saint Joan,* which might seem to be aloof both from the post-war generation and from Shaw, has as its theme the homelessness of genius. Among other things it is a commentary on Shaw's autobiographical remark: "I was at home only in the realm of my imagination, and at my ease only with the mighty dead."

Whether it is fair to stress, to the extent that Edmund Wilson has done, the subjective element in the later plays of Shaw, it is evident that these plays, from

Heartbreak House to the end of the roster, do compose a separate group which we can now see as a whole. Two of them are called by Shaw Political Extravaganzas, and the name might be extended to the five plays which are a fantastic chronicle of the interim between the two world wars: *The Apple Cart, Too True to Be Good, On the Rocks, The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles,* and *Geneva.* Are these plays inferior? From a natural tendency to say that what a famous writer does today is not up to what he did twenty years ago, and from a natural feeling that so old a man must be in his dotage, critics have on the whole damned this last cycle of Shavian plays. To be sure, they do not have the galvanic energy of *Man and Superman* or the tough dialectic of *Major Barbara.* But they are not poor stuff. They would be enough to establish a great reputation for any new dramatist. Moreover, the Political Extravaganza is not only a new form in drama, but the form in which Shaw's genius has been most at home. Shaw's career might be regarded as a search for a form which would fully express his genius. The Political Extravaganza is such a form, though Shaw perfected it only after he had passed his prime and written his greatest plays. The Political Extravaganza is definite enough and free enough, fantastic enough and realistic enough, uproarious enough and serious enough. It is Shavian form.

IV

The freshman can see that Shaw is funny. The sophomore can see that he is serious. The junior can see that he is a man of the theatre. To graduate, however, in Shavian analysis we must discover precisely what a Shavian work consists of. I choose for more detailed consideration a play that is probably more characteristic than outstanding in the Shavian canon, a play written while Shaw was still experimenting but was drawing towards the height of his powers: *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* (1899).

Captain Brassbound is a modern version of a pirate king. He roams the seas plotting vengeance on the wicked uncle who has caused his mother's imprisonment and death. But when he has lured the wicked uncle into the Moroccan mountains and is about to hand him over to the tender mercies of a sheikh, there arrives a superior sheikh whose head will be demanded by the British government if Englishmen are kidnapped in his territories. Brassbound is handed over to the American navy, but is finally set free through the intercession of the uncle's kindly sister-in-law. Naturally, the pirate king would like to marry the lady after this, and the lady herself is not hostile; but in the end they agree to part.

This is the simple air on which Shaw plays variations. What is his method? A silent moving picture of a performance would record scene after scene of what the Germans call Kitsch and what Americans call Corn. In a Moroccan setting, all taken, Shaw informs us, from a novel by Cunningham Graham, are enacted corny scenes of pursuit and rescue, spiced with love interest. And there are other conventional ingredients of a graver sort. The plot is unfolded in resolutely Ibsenite fashion, that is, by conversation and innuendo referring to

a buried crime about which we only gradually become clear. The play is subtitled: An Adventure.

But only subtitled. The main title is *Captain Brassbound's Conversion,* and of the conversion which is the subject of the play, the narrative pattern gives no inkling. At this point we hit upon Shaw's method of inversion, which in such a play as this is not the simple inversion of *Arms and the Man.* According to the pattern an Englishman and his sister-in-law are rescued by civilization from the clutches of a pirate-villain. According, however, to the interpretation imposed upon this pattern, Brassbound is the hero and protagonist. Yet—and it is such double-twists which are the making of Shavian drama—Brassbound is no hero in Douglas Fairbanks style. He is disreputable and down at heel. He is also no villain, since the person he chiefly imposes upon is himself. He has something of the manner of a Byronic sort of hero; but the Byronic hero is himself an ambivalent figure, compounded equally of strength and weakness. How are we to take Brassbound? In view of the conversion at the end, shall we say that he is a villain converted to virtue as summarily as Edmund in *King Lear?* All possible interpretations are suggested by the play itself, and the method of their suggestion is Shaw's dramatic dialectic. The primary meaning of Brassbound's character appears in the upshot. The real man has been hiding behind the mask of a villain-hero. Degenerating further and further into a shabby tourists' escort, Brassbound, true to his name, shored up the heroic purpose of vengeance against his ruins. He hoarded photographs and newspaper cuttings for purposes of mournful and vengeful contemplation. Then a woman lays bare his soul, and he is converted to realism.

Shaw's technique is not, as has been alleged, to render a serious problem palatable by a silly story. The silly story functions as an integral part of a whole. It is the basis of dozens of ironies, of which the central irony is the contrast between romance and reality, illusion and actuality, silly stories and flinty facts. This irony pervades the whole work. When, for instance, we are told a Kitsch story of crime in the West Indies, and the question is raised why a solicitor was not sent from England, the prosaic but simple explanation is that the value of the estate was less than it would have cost to make it worth a lawyer's while to leave his practice in London. When we are confronted with fighting sheikhs out of pulp fiction, we find that their actions are determined by the plain but significant fact of British imperialism. It may be recalled that Shaw had condemned the staging of fights and crimes as mistakes. This, however, does not mean that he eschews such things. He uses them, but ironically, not naively. They are always ridiculous in Shaw, and their ridiculousness has always a point.

Like the plot, the characters are given ironical meaning. Even the American captain, primarily a tool of the plot, is given a touch of significance as "a curious ethnological specimen, with all the nations of the old world at war in his veins." Every minor character enforces an irony. Hallam, the wicked uncle, is a judge and a pillar of society; conservatism shows its other face in Rankin, the defeatist missionary whose only convert in Morocco is a London slum boy

named Drinkwater. Drinkwater is Brassbound on a lower level of culture. Like Brassbound he feasts upon romance—in the pages of the pulps. Brassbound's great theme is his innocent mother punished by Hallam; Drinkwater has been acquitted by Hallam when actually guilty. This contrast shows Hallam as at once ruthless and incompetent.

In this framework of fictions, the problem of romance and realism is thrashed out by violent juxtapositions and confrontations. Rudolph Valentino is, as it were, confronted with Henry Ford. There is irony within irony. If Brassbound does not support his role of villain, Hallam does not support his role of hero. The initial irony of his character is one that Ibsen had rendered familiar: the pillar of society is a scoundrel. Hallam has played a tricky game in the West Indies and Brassbound's mother was driven to her death. The law, moreover, which Hallam administers in England is interpreted by Shaw to be crude vengeance wreaked by a class of crooks masquerading as churchgoers. Yet Hallam is not a villain, for he is more victim than agent. He only does what his class does and what he has been brought up to do. He means well and is privately harmless. Far from battening on his ill-gotten gains, he is finding the West Indies estate more a liability than an asset. Brassbound for his part is no avenging angel. His interpretation of the facts is quite as incomplete and primitive as Hallam's. In fact, his standards are the same: like Hallam, he believes above all in revenge. Pillar of society and Byronic hero are equally guilty because identically guilty.

The conversion of Brassbound is effected by Lady Cicely Waynefleet. The last page of the play, in which the two agree to part, is one of the best illustrations of the achievement of Shavian comedy. It is neither glib nor ponderous, neither flippant nor sentimental. It is a taut, terse, and true ending in which the dialogue, so far from being an independent stream rippling over the stones of a plot, is fused with theme, story, and characterization. Brassbound presses Lady Cicely to marry him to the point where she is about to consent. At that point he withdraws the offer. We infer that Brassbound has found himself anew in the experience of dominating Lady Cicely. "You can do no more for me now," he says. "I have blundered somehow on the secret of command at last." When Brassbound leaves, Lady Cicely says: "How glorious! How glorious! And what an escape!" It is one of the splendid and expressive endings of comedy. It reveals that Lady Cicely herself found the escape from the real to the romantic entirely glorious. The conversion of Brassbound almost caused the apostasy of his savior. That is the ultimate irony. But since Brassbound *was* converted, he could not allow it. The title of the piece is quite inevitable, and it is the only thing in the whole play that is not ironical.

V

What then is to be said for Shavian comedy? What are its merits? What is its nature?

The dialogue of Shavian comedy has always been praised. It was praised by Max Beerbohm and G. K. Chesterton forty years ago, and it is praised by

Edmund Wilson, Edgar Johnson, and Jacques Barzun today. But my point in this essay is that Shaw's talent is not merely for conversation but also for dramaturgy. In all justice it should be said that Max Beerbohm pointed this out in a retraction of his earlier view that Shaw was a writer of conversations, not plays. This view, says Beerbohm, collapses when you actually see Shaw in the theatre: "To deny that he is a dramatist merely because he chooses, for the most part, to get drama out of contrasted types of character and thought, without action, and without appeal to the emotions, seems to be both unjust and absurd."

But these words of Beerbohm's, written in 1905, have not been heeded. Bernard Shaw has sometimes been omitted from histories of the drama and more often relegated to a humble role beside Granville Barker and Arthur Pinero. Recent critics who have rediscovered the artistry of Shaw have rediscovered the prose style much more than the dramaturgy. Even Beerbohm's praise is left-handed in its assertion that Shavian drama is "without action, and without appeal to the emotions." It is curious that almost on the same page Beerbohm had spoken of the splendid emotional crisis in the second act of *Major Barbara,* and had shown himself the first critic, so far as I know, to note the vein of spirituality in Shaw. It is curious, because it shows how a critic can revert to the cliché conception of Shaw—"a giant brain and no heart," to cite one of the critics in *Fanny's First Play*—after a momentary escape from it. It has been said of Bertolt Brecht that he thinks with his heart and feels with his head. The same could be said of Shaw. His intellect and his passions are alike all that one could expect of an artist-philosopher. But there is something perpetually unexpected and astonishing about the way they mix.

The allegation that Shaw's play are "without action" is more plausible but still wrong. Most of the plays from *Arms and the Man* to *The Millionaires* entail every bit as much action as other authors' plays and for the good reason that many of them are other authors' plots. The misapprehension comes about because Shaw *toys* with the plots instead of gratefully accepting them for what they are, because also he has in his prefaces railed so often against the "tomfoolery of action," and because of the interpenetration of action with discussion. Look for a moment at the most actionless of Shaw's plays, *Getting Married* and *Misalliance.* Even these are not static dramas of a sort to win the approval of a Maeterlinck or a Chekhov. In both there is enough plot for an ordinary Broadway play. (It is amusing that Shaw has to be defended by such an argument.) In *Getting Married* the destiny of a fair number of characters is not merely discussed but settled, and the routine of boy-meets-girl is given a Shavian performance. In *Misalliance,* there is all the violence and tomfoolery that anyone could wish. An aviator—and this in 1910—crashes into the precincts; his passenger turns out to be a lady whom Sidney Hook would have to term at once eventful and event-making. In *Getting Married* there is a coal-dealer's wife who makes love to a bishop through the mails under the name Incognita Appassionata; in *Misalliance* there is a gunman. It is not the lack of action but the presence of intelligent dialogue which is too much for

many modern directors, actors, critics, and audiences.

So much for technique. An artist who is a critic of morality and society must also submit to a moral and social criticism. What are Shaw's values? Some will point in reply to the most extended of his philosophic works, such as *Back to Methuselah*. Others will observe that Shaw has chopped and changed. Now he is a social democrat, now an anti-democratic pessimist. Now he is a Huxleyan champion of science against religion, now a metabiological champion of religion against science. He can be represented as merely a disciple of Marx, or of Shelley, or of Samuel Butler. Edmund Wilson concludes that he is just confused.

This might not—though again, it might—be a damaging criticism of a lyric poet, but it is certainly a damaging criticism of a moralist; and one cannot be quite happy about Wilson's approval of Shaw the artist when it is qualified by so strong a disapproval of Shaw the philosopher. Of course it can be maintained that Shaw's argument against the pure artist is a deceptive strategy to trick us into believing that he is a philosopher. Even so a confused satirist is a bad satirist, and thus a bad artist.

But surely Wilson is wrong. What he finds inconsistent—for instance, that Shaw can be at the same time a social democrat and an admirer of Stalin—will not seem inconsistent to everyone. Wilson says that Shaw's thinking is on three levels—the level of everyday life, the level of politics, and the level of metaphysics—and that the three are never integrated. To be sure, it is no answer to retort that *all* men think on these three levels without a successful integration of the three, for Shaw as an artist-philosopher must be expected to succeed where other men fail. The answer, as I have tried elsewhere to demonstrate, is that Shaw's integration is not so incomplete as is supposed.[1] Here is it enough to state that Shaw is sometimes accused of betraying beliefs which he never held. He is often suspected of trying to be much more systematic than he ever intended to be. Indeed he is not utterly systematic but he is roughly consistent; his attitude to beliefs has been, in the main, that of a pragmatist. This is perhaps what most clearly differentiates Shaw from satirists of previous ages, such as Chaucer with his catholic criteria or Voltaire with his deistic criteria. It is at once Shaw's great title to originality as an artist and his great title to represent his age.

Shaw's pragmatic adaptability is not mere opportunism. He has often sponsored an unpopular cause which was later recognized to be right. He has believed in what might as justifiably be called Romanticism as the hocus-pocus of popular novelists, namely, in the continuity of the ideal and the real, the spiritual and the physical, the theoretic and the practical. He is a Marxist in his hatred of hypocritical ideologies, of religions which are opiates; money, he says, is the most important thing in the world, and you are damned without it. On the other hand, Shaw probably agrees with Hotchkiss in *Getting Married:* "Religion is a great force; the only real motive force in the world." The Shavian will see no final contradiction between the two attitudes. Religion

[1] *A Century of Hero Worship,* Part Three, Chapter Two.

is for Shaw a natural fact, not a supernatural fact; just as economics is for Shaw spiritual enough to be the subject of high comedy.

The great problem of Shaw's plays—we have examined one instance in some detail—is the relation between ideals and reality, and thus the relation between idealism and realism. There is, according to Shaw, a wrong realism and a right realism, a wrong idealism and a right idealism. A wrong realism is exemplified in Undershaft, whose realistic vision supports only egoism. Idealism on the other hand may be worse. It may be the conscious mask of a realist, as it is in the propaganda of Undershaft's factory or in the gifts of Bodger the brewer to the Salvation Army. It may be self-deception, as it is in Barbara before she sees quite clearly that she is combatting liquor with a brewer's money. In either case, idealism is painted in more horrible colors by Shaw, as it had been by Ibsen and for that matter by Jesus Christ, than is Machiavellian realism. The conclusion of *Major Barbara* is that the high purpose of the idealist should be linked to the realist's sense of fact, power, and possibility. Where practical genius is found in a lofty mind Shaw approves. His Caesar is a realist with a soul, a realist who values his own life as nothing beside the high destiny of Rome. His Joan is an idealist with a head, an idealist who can see the simple facts better than the soldiers, the politicians, and the clerics put together, a visionary whose hallucinations have more validity than the philosophic ideas of the learned.

Ibsen's Brand, striving to "live the vision into deed," had said:

> Daily drudgery be one
> With star-flights beyond the sun.

Through Ibsen Romanticism came to flower in Scandinavia; through Ibsen, Shaw, and others Romanticism was renewed after a generation of anti-Romanticism. Now the doctrine of religious-materialism or materialist-religion, of idealist-realism or realistic-idealism, is one of the themes of Romanticism from Blake to Shaw. It is a leitmotiv of Shavian drama turning up in the pseudo-flippant form of his late Political Extravaganzas. In *Too True to Be Good* (1929), man is described as having higher and lower centres, as in D. H. Lawrence. But Shaw is not the spokesman of lower centres; nor is he, as many assume, the spokesman of the higher centres. He attributes our troubles to the separation of higher and lower. "Since the war," says his preacher, "the lower centres have become vocal. And the effect is that of an earthquake . . . the institutions are rocking and splitting and sundering. They leave us no place to live, no certainties, no workable morality, no heaven, no hell, no commandments, and no God." Or, as the studious Sergeant in the same play puts it, in speaking of the sexual ethics of the 'twenties: "But when men and women pick one another up just for a bit of fun, they find they've picked up more than they bargained for, because men and women have a top storey as well as a ground floor; and you can't have the one without the other."

Shaw's Romanticism is a more highly developed philosophy than the Romanticism of the first generation. Philosophically one should look for its

affiliations less with "mysticism" or "materialism"—the two systems commonly associated with Shaw—than with the pragmatic pluralism of William James. The attitudes of pragmatic pluralism are part and parcel of Shaw's art as well as of his thought. Nowhere in dogmatic communist writing does one have a sense of dialectic and antithesis as keenly as in a Shavian play. Shaw's mind is well-stocked, as everyone knows, and he is famous for the number of things he can mention on one page; but all this would mean nothing if he could not marshal his facts ironically. The chief mark of Shavian prose is its use of ironic antithesis and juxtaposition. Contrary to what one expects from a propagandist, Shaw not only shows the liberal's sense of the other man's point of view. He has a sense of every conceivable point of view, and can pack all the points of view into one long sentence, which climbs by parallelisms and antitheses to a climax, and then sinks with the finality of a conqueror to a conclusion which Shaw will not allow you to evade. In its course the Shavian sentence, still more the Shavian paragraph, looks in all possible directions. For Shaw sees the world as what James called a multiverse, and that is unusual in a satirist, who is customarily something of a monomaniac.

It is a fact of curious interest that William James, who thought Shaw "a great power as a concrete moralist," hit upon one of the essentials of Shaw, to wit, "the way he brings home to the *eyes,* as it were, the difference between 'convention' and 'conscience.' " Such a statement would often be the cue for a discussion of Shaw as puritan and protestant. But there is more to it than that. The difference between convention and conscience is certainly a moral matter, but Shaw is a *concrete* moralist, a master of parable, who has worked out for the presentation of his protestant pragmatist morality a new dramaturgy. Shaw is one of the few artists whose grasp of political, moral, and social forces is really professional; in political, moral, and social territory he is not a mere expropriator. But he is a genuine dramatist in that he brings his matter home to the eyes, which is something that neither the historian nor the sociologist, the poet nor the novelist, need do. All these bring visions before the mind's eye; none, except the dramatist, has to unfold his vision before the physical eyes. Appreciators of Shaw's dialogue have explained to us what Shaw has done for the ear; those who appreciate his dramaturgy know that he addressed himself also to the eye, not indeed in giving separate attention to the eye by way of spectacle, but in fusing the elements into the one kinetic picture which is stage production (or screen production, as Shaw's movie audiences will hasten to add). William James' statement that Shaw's genius is much more important than his philosophy is true, if by it we understand that genius is a synthesizing power which obliterates barriers between thought and technique and gives evidence of both in a particular mode of presentation. The Shavian mode is drama.

PAUL BARTLETT:

Grilled Windows

It's getting dark and I've had my second hypodermic and I feel warm and my pillow feels warm and I feel safe and the house is still. I liked the story about the woman who took dope; what adventures she had, six months in Harbin, six months. . . . I see a sort of dream and my child's back again; I'm back in Colima and it's hot and the sun's on the slopes of the volcano. . . . It doesn't seem to me I was born there. Doesn't seem like I used to look out the windows at the volcano and think about its lavender top and all the big fields around the town . . . sugarcane and orange and lime groves and that old bridge with the stone benches on it and the palms leaning over the hot streets. It's all so plain and yet I wasn't ever there; maybe I was.

The house was on Carranza Street, numero 18, big rooms, grilled windows. There was the patio inside and the corral in back of that, with wooden doors between the grilled windows on the street side, toward the volcano, toward the people that walked on the street, back and forth. The wooden door was so old Cortez might have knocked on it. Papa . . . the kind of colonel who spends most of his time at home, locked in his room, laughing, gambling. Women and gambling.

He'd have been better off if he'd stayed peasant like mother, just sleepy peasant, brain full of sueños, brain that said: sure, you do it; Maria bring this, Carlota bring that . . . niña take Chula out to the jardin. That was the first nana; there was another nana; I remember scars on her throat, terrible things, gold on her teeth, big earring in one ear, rebozo always dirty . . . fed me sweet potatoes and sugarcane and dirty meat. That buzzing sound—those are the flies on my legs and hands and neck and face.

Go on, get back in your room, that's a good bed in there, papa would roar. Wooden planks, with straw pallet over them, sheet to throw over me. Lie in bed while he had another party and the mariachis killed the air, seven years old, lie in bed, nothing to ask, or kneel by the bed and say . . .

All of them slept in the same room with me: Arturo, Carlos, Raoul. They said they were my brothers. Ate out of tin plates. Orange trees in the patio, banana trees leaning against the wall where the bougainvillea burned. Pigs in the corral. Papa came home drunk. Here's a parrot for you. And Carlos brought me the armadillo. Smart.

Why did I try to be smart? I'd better have played out my games with the parrot and the armadillo; sit in the sand, wait. They told me all the dirt, the human kind. Carlos with his girls, Arturo with his Jesuit "friend"—just to have him come into our room was to think pigs were better.

Verde, the parrot, had a rasping croak . . . I hear him so plainly and I can smell the orange blossoms and see the snow on top of the volcano and feel the

heat as we walked over the bridge. Every day was alike and heat was volcanic and it riddled you and you lay down anywhere and the flies came. It was as if somebody gave you injections of flies and heat. . . .

I'd like to go back, get warm, get really warm. Like to go to school again, over the hot cobbles, with the nana, with the heat on the wall where the Presidencia was, with the heat in the long fronds of the palms, heat dancing in the air in front of us, between us and the volcano. Sweat runs down my arms and back and legs. And there's Coco, standing at the corner with his terrible old bicycle and there's Concepcion going in her store. . . .

When I was eight papa said: if you speak to a stranger I'll beat you. When I was nine my brothers took me to a Sunday promenade in the plaza. When I was ten I said adios to a stranger. When I was twelve they sent me off to school in Guadalajara.

I was scared when I went away. I was afraid to stay home any longer and I was afraid to go, and I went away fearing my father and his drunken parties, remembering crumbs of nice things: the snow of the pico de fuego, the smell of orange trees over garden walls, the sound of doves calling, the water bubbling under the bridge with the palms hanging low over the sides of the stream, palms hanging over sun-bright walls; I remembered the faces seen through grilled windows; I remembered my parrot and armadillo and there were other crumbs; there were dirty things about sex and women and the parties (parties I never saw); there was something about high mass and candles and the sound of rain, the jerking of an eathquake; there were glimpses of mama's face . . . how strange, to see, to hear, to feel. . . . I feel safe and warm—the house is still.

Guadalajara made me want to become a nun. Maybe it was the town's bigness that got into me, maybe I just wanted to become a nun . . . there were so many faces and skirts in the school: faces and skirts; I'd never seen so many kinds, not close, not all around me, not making a noise, not. . . . I wanted to run off and I dreamed of running off. I was pretty then. I thought some man might like to keep me until I was old enough to love. I remember the way my eyebrows curved.

Skirts and faces made me shyer. I tried to play their games but I never liked to. Didn't want to stand there and be yelled at, didn't want to yell back. Somebody hit me on the head with a baseball and I fell and they left me on the field. They said: come on, leave her there, she's a baby. And the blood ran out of my head and then somebody saw the pool and ran for help. My heart began to bother me after that.

God, how plainly I see the school, its ramshackle rooms, windows with glass knocked out, broken steps, two patios, clock that never kept time, picture of Hidalgo, patio trees dry and twisted, like the brains of the sisters that ran the place. Just one nice thing, that was the red bougainvillea that sprawled across a big wall. Same color as the one at home.

I see him now, I see him clearly and he sees me and he's coming, he's coming closer and closer; he's smiling at me. Yes, little Gabriel, climb on my

bed and smile at me. You don't look like you'd been dead. Are you dead? You've come back because tomorrow is the dia de los muertos. I'll buy you a sugar skull tomorrow, a thirty centavo skull, and I'll have your name put on it: Gabriel—in gold letters. De veras! Won't you like that?

Gabriel, go away. I want to forget you. . . .

Don't come back.

I must sleep.

We used to write notes and hang them over a wall at school. Boys fastened replies to the strings and we spent hours fishing, giggling, whispering, listening, lying on the dead leaves, smiling . . . there was the French girl; she liked me. There was Trini. She could sing and she and Sister Ana sang for us sometimes.

Not hot, not cold, days when we sat in the sun to study our French and Sister Agatha would sit beside me and I could smell her and hear her beads and there was a silver cross she liked to play with and there was that strange loneliness that would come over me when she sat by me a long time; I wanted to talk to her and put my face in her lap. I wonder how old she was. I wanted to say: take me to town this afternoon, let me see something besides these walls and the hideous dry trees. And she would smile and I would smile. She taught me about the Virgin and taught me prayers and taught me to jump over bad cracks in the floor if I wanted special good luck. But I got better grades when I counted cricket chirps; I got so I could tell by the way the sisters crossed themselves whether I'd be lucky all day.

Papa died. I was fifteen. There were no more checks for the fees at the collegio and it was back to Colima, to the patio and the parrot . . . the armadillo was dead . . . it was hot and the heat was waiting for me at the bridge; there was no Carlos, no Arturo; Arturo was married; Carlos had a job at La Fortuna. Raoul. . . .

Cobbles got hotter and hotter every day and a cloud hung over the top of the pico de fuego and I sat on the ledge of the window in my room and looked out—there wasn't any rain. I walked the patio, went back to the corral: my mind was walking, walking everywhere, with sex, god, hate, hope. I used to climb up the patio wall when it was hot in the late afternoon; I'd get a little better air up there. I went there day after day. An old woman lived next door, wrinkled, white-headed, bent with arthritis. She got so she called up to me and we got so we'd talk. She asked me down to visit her and I scrambled down and she gave me wine and dulces and I saw her shabby rooms and listened to her. She had potted azaleas, roses and hibiscus in the patio; the patio tiles were cracked; she had two clarins and we'd sit among the potted things and talk and the birds would sing. She told me about love and two men —rivals—god, how fiercely she told the story. About a killing, stolen money . . . she shut herself up because he betrayed her. Never went out. He was dead. She never went out.

Strange I've never loved Alberto. I've tried. Can't. I don't know why. . . . He isn't good-looking but it's not that; it's not his silly laugh; he's thin but it's

not that. I liked him when he came to the house. Mother liked him. He would come early, maybe at nine. I'd sit in the room, hold his hands through the grilled window; we'd kiss, our faces against the bars. Mama said: he'll make a wonderful doctor.

He's not.

I'm just as much alone as when I was back there. My mind goes away; it walks away and there's the clock and the picture of Hidalgo and there's Sister Agatha sitting by me and there's Gabriel and he's eating the baby food and getting ready to die.

I hate him; I hate time; I hate the way it's gone. Why should I be thirty-three, my face wrinkled, my skin yellow? I look at my hands. I think, what's going to happen to my heart? I could become a nun; I guess it's not too late. But the woman who took dope never became a nun.

It might have been better if I'd never gone away again. It wasn't like going to the ocean for a while, coming back on the train with coconuts and zapotes and bananas and oranges. There's never anything like the ocean and the sand and the sound. There's the palmero with the parrots and canaries; there's the mist beating up into the light, drenching you, keeping the hot sun off. There are the shells, the long ones shaped like horns, the ones that are colored green and blue and white. At Cuyutlan we'd pick up the oval shells, the thin ones, the ones with the palm tree in the center—just as though it was a real palm. How easily they broke, only a touch and they were shattered, only a touch and the tree was broken.

We ate on the veranda one year. . . . I guess it was the Madrid Hotel, near the beach, near the ola verde; sleeping there was like sleeping in someone's hands, the waves I mean. Charles was French. He'd come down from Mexico City, he liked the shells, the mist, the beach that curved to a white cliff. He talked differently, mouth different, eyes different; he touched my hands. He said, I work in a bank. There were palms close to the beach on the wet sand, the out-running tide flats, changes, his eyes different because of the changes. He told me how old he was; I told him. A star was over the water, as if it were the light on a ship; then mama called.

I lost the shells we picked up together, lost them when we moved away, I guess it was then. I'd like to have gone back and picked up some more shells, let them break in my hands. I wasn't wearing black clothes then. Mama, in her black, so empty, stiff, saying don't do that now, don't do that. Of course I'll wear black things, till I die. It's only right that I should. The church knows best, she shouted.

Queretaro is dry and full of the bleached eyes of looking; the sky is paler; the wind blows oftener. I met them, the Ochoas, the Uribes, the Martinezes, the Gonzalezes. Sr. Uribe had a patio that had a figure of the Virgin, carved in San Luis Potosi. Sra. Ochoa had a boy named Alberto. The trolley ran past our house; there were jacaranda trees; there was a store across the street named Corona. Bad, mama said, bad to move at my age, bad to get away from the old friends. What awful panaderias they've got here. Ah, the

servants, and Raoul never gets home until late every night. He shouldn't be working like that. You must do something.

I thought of the empty hot heat in Colima and shook her by the shoulder but she only cried.

I'm lonely.

It's my turn now.

Gabriel—I miss you. You were so sweet and nice and good and clever and you were my first. First. Why are you dead? But maybe it's that way, la vida, sad, life of loneliness, sad. I'm always in this house, and I don't know why; I'm shut in and the clock and the picture, they're ticking together. No cine, wear black, mustn't eat out, wear black all your life, no radio, no dances, no . . .

What's that shaking the room, a truck on Avenida Juarez?

It's like the trembling of the ground in Colima. The walls would shake; the caged birds would flutter and try to get out.

I should have been a nun. I could kneel and pray and ask god to take care of my heart when it hurts. I could ask god to make me a place for myself in myself. I wouldn't lie.

But I've always lied. There was all that deception about my family, grandpa being Spanish, papa an haciendado. There was all that stuff to cover up the things that Carlos did. There were all those lies about the woman he should have married. I've told everybody it wasn't my fault that Gabriel died. I've told everybody that I love Alberto. . . .

When it's dark and Alberto's away and the maid's gone out that man comes and sneaks up the back stair. He always wears black and has that dirty black scarf around his mouth. I hope I never see his face. Maybe he hasn't any mouth. He hasn't come back for more than a week. Such a strange sound, scuffing his feet on the concrete, hitting the toes of his shoes against each step. Tomorrow, I'll put your pictures on the mantelpiece, Gabriel. I'll get out all the best snapshots of you, the ones I took of you a few days before you died, the ones we took of you as you lay there in your casket. You were pretty, Gabriel. You didn't look like you were dead.

I don't know why I wasn't careful about the food I gave you.

I don't know why it's so still.

No wind in the trees outside, no trucks rumbling along the street, no trolley, no cars, no people walking. . . .

Strange, to feel this way, to be floating and there are the orange blossoms and there's papa: if you speak to a stranger I'll beat you. There's mama. She's asleep. She's sent Clotilda out for pulque. There's the rain on our roof and the heat near the bridge and there's a wind in the long fronds that hang over the walls. Voices. Voices are moving through me and they wet me with cold tongues; I want to scream.

WALLACE STEVENS:

The Bed of Old John Zeller

This structure of ideas, these ghostly sequences
Of the mind, result only in disaster. It follows,
Casual poet, that to add your own disorder to disaster

Makes more of it. It is easy to wish for another structure
Of ideas and to say as usual that there must be
Other ghostly sequences and, it would be, luminous

Sequences, thought of among spheres in the old peak of night:
This is the habit of wishing, as if one's grandfather lay
In one's heart and wished as he had always wished, unable

To sleep in that bed for its disorder, talking of ghostly
Sequences that would be sleep and ting-tang tossing, so that
He might slowly forget. It is more difficult to evade

That habit of wishing and to accept the structure
Of things as the structure of ideas. It was the structure
Of things at least that was thought of in the old peak of night.

Less and Less Human, O Savage Spirit

If there must be a god in the house, must be,
Saying things in the rooms and on the stair,

Let him move as the sunlight moves on the floor,
Or moonlight, silently, as Plato's ghost

Or Aristotle's skeleton. Let him hang out
His stars on the wall. He must dwell quietly.

He must be incapable of speaking, closed,
As those are: as light, for all its motion, is;

As color, even the closest to us, is;
As shapes, though they portend us, are.

It is the human that is the alien,
The human that has no cousin in the moon.

It is the human that demands his speech
From beasts or from the incommunicable mass.

If there must be a god in the house, let him be one
That will not hear us when we speak: a coolness,

A vermilioned nothingness, any stick of the mass
Of which we are too distantly a part.

WELDON KEES:

Four Poems

1

Ruined travelers in sad trousseaux
Roost on my doorstep, indolent and worn.
Not one of them fulfills despised Rousseau's
Predictions. Perhaps they are waiting to be born.
If so, the spot's been badly chosen.
This is a site for posthumous investigations,
Pillows stuffed with nettles, charnel notions:
Apoplectic executioners, bungled incisions.
Indeed, our solitary midwife fondles the hemlock.

We welcomed one poor hackneyed Christ,
Sad bastard, croaking of pestilence. The basement
Holds him now. He has not as yet arisen.
The tickets are ready; the line forms on the right.
Justice and virtue, you will find, have been amazingly preserved.

2

As water from a dwindling reservoir
Uncovers mossy stones, new banks of silt,
So every minute that I spend with you reveals
New flaws, new features, new intangibles.
We have been sitting here for hours—
"I spent that summer in Madrid,
The winter on the coast of France—
The Millotsons were there, and Farnsworth.

My work has perished with the rest
Of Europe, gone, all gone. We will not see the end."

You said goodbye, and your perfume
Lingered for hours. At first it seemed
Like summer dying there, then rank and sharp.

And yet I did not air the room.

3

Among Victorian beadwork and the smell of plush,
The owls, stuffed and marvelously sinister,
Glare from dark corners, waiting for the night.
High up, the moose's passive eyes explore
Candles, unlit, within cut-glass. A door
Is opened, and you enter with a look
You might have saved for Pliny or the Pope.

The furniture has shrunk now thirty years
Have passed (with talent thinning out, and words
Gone dead), and mouths of friends in photographs
Display their hopeful and outmoded smiles.
You counted on at least a sputter of nostalgia,
However fretful. That was a mistake. Even the moose
Regards you with a tired, uncomprehending stare.

4

Signboards commemorate their restingplace,
The graveless of another century;
Came and were conquered; now their bones
Are dust where idiot highways run.

Land in their eyes, unquiet ancestors
(On fences yellow signs clang in the wind)
Unstirred by suns drying the brown weeds
Above them now in parched and caking land.

But when they speak of you, they feel the need
Of voices polished and revised by history,
The martial tone, words framed in capitals.

It is good to be deaf in a deafening time
With the sky gone colorless, while the dead
Thunder breaks, but only in the mind.

HUBERT CREEKMORE:

Music in the Rec Hut

The pen stops in a phrase of a letter home,
The magazine drops in the sailor's lap,
Its romance defeated. Talk and jokes become

Dissolved by inner moods, as music wraps
The men in shining cords that wind
Back overseas, like hungry roots to sap

The strength of distant earth. It is behind
Their eyes the music lives, the frieze
Of Tin-Pan tunes evolving scores designed

More human than all symphonies. The keys
Fling out from the upright cataracts
Of memory in every nimble piece.

Boogie-woogie, rhumba and waltz attack
The forfeit past, and rout out nights
Of Negro piano in a dim cafe, and shacks

For barbecue across America, sights
Of lonely childhood, dancing, kiss
Of lips in tree-spread dark, the wife who died

Last week, good times and good friends. For this
Is not the song of radio,
Whose texture conjures merchandise, whose voice

Is advertising. Here the song is no
Barren orchestration of guile,
But is woven with the tones that flow

From each man into it: how the bile
Of sorrow burned them, alchemy
Of love and laughter gilded the body's vial.

Through gray smoke clouds the men stare. Each eye
Entreats the curving walls to part
On the giant swirl of scorpio in the sky,

And the sting of night and starlight in every heart.

W. Y. TINDALL:

Felix Culpa

Banking the air into the bushy sun
Two loves in one another's plane remarked
The crocodile descending from his palm.
That was no forest for a simple man.

Hand in hand prospected underwoods
While their creature muscled on his path
Springing leaves around those innocents
Covering panther serpent and giraffe.

The serpent put his lips to hand in hand
Printing with his lips a smiling wound
And wound his length along the winding path.
Father (with retractors) said "It's sound"

And pointed to the cutting on the hill
Where flatcars carried barns along the rails
And from the roundhouse infants carried trains.
He could not tell their purpose or the scale

Or ask the two librarians if his key
Was suitable for Sunday and their door.
He pushed between them; but the lock was stiff
As twelve labors and another more.

The Section

Pigs travel in the street
Humping the concrete
Liquefying it. Their boar
Leaping through the carriage door
Seizes a finger and the underhand.
Forgiving him (O spear the horses) fretting
Roll on (with difficulties) to the cutting.

At our usual table now
High in that sterile bowl
(Our heads of hairs touching the sterile ceiling)
We order sections of sweet fowl
And all the waiters with their knives

Whisper around the central cow
Preparing her for the cutting.

See how the white meat lies
Part on breast and part on thighs
And how her rolling eyes
Follow the sections and knives.

With her knife the victim now (and then)
Removes a section from her thigh
And vertically bisects her jaw
From nostril to rolling eye. She hands
White meat to one who seems and understands.

Forgiving her (O spear the horses) fretting
Roll on (with difficulties) from the cutting.

The Fleece

Beat the stringing and commence
With Jason in Medea's race
Unstringing every thought from sense;
For mind cannot but eye can face
The fleece that in this atmosphere
Hangs mathematically clear.

Hanging from a golden bough
It sleeps while the fire-breather sleeps
On planted and unplanted teeth.
What are the Colchian oxen now
To golden mindless cockles there
Fiddling their Medusa's hair?

O leave it in its atmosphere
Out of hand and seas and spores
Dear the dear monocle implores.
Castor and the impious hear
The beat of fifty oars; the glass
Sees judgment and another pass.

Those amphibians and the girl
Mindless with the eyes of shears
Shear away that golden coil
The strings and all the wax of years
Floating ominously where
The other dainties beat the air.

PRISCILLA FOLSOM:

Child Was

In the intensity of lost expression
The child heart in the child mouth
(Equipped with new beyond its facile count)
Stutters the lost impression of the
    rose time-stripped of petal
(Velvet cup on cup slipt off, cast
    down; worn raveled cloth upon
    the mold-damp earth)

And no more does the honey-mouth
    seek taste of scent.
The rose itself forbears, is lost, is
    candy-spent
(Melted away in the glass cage:
Only the wrinkled wart of dust to
    harden like a canker on
    the silk)

And with the child . . .
Child no longer is . . .
But wearing the double crown of looking forth
Approaches the core and seeks the bitter
    bud of the empty sweet
(Approaches as searchlights
    ring a fading star
Or as the wake might seek the
    whipping rock:
    "Look back—our rock!"

Or even as courtiers kneel before their lord
    in glib and absent phrases of
    are here and we adore)

Yet rose has lost its rose
(The fractured scent, the
    turmoil dream
    climaxed to end in less than
    playful play)
The rose has lost its rose
    (even as rose)
Eyes have seen: like a reflection

finger felt, hand
rubbed, and knuckle scraped
(All unreceived within the mirror frame:
And mirror did not break or
shuck its cage; the
show-case melt)

. . . Like the reflection of an automat
the child reflects: is is,
(And yet forever
was has lost its was
in time awake)

JOHN NERBER:

The Condemned

On whom will next the wheels of tin
descend,
The monotonous churning hours of the clock
Release, as if by the lifting
of an embargo
A ship reprieved comes gratefully to port

Under the dome of the enormous tower
I sit looking out over the deserted square,
Feeling with nerves the cessation
of power,
The leaden weights and wooden gears

The hands pointing upward arrested
Over the counterfeit guilty number,
As if the hour could no longer charm
Nor the minute surrender

As one who in the prison of a similar
vault
Feeling the current fail, is aware
Of absence, a doldrum of the inexplicable,
I glance upward to my ceiling

Not yet with dazed intelligence attuned
To the ordinary and factual explanation,

To see amid ruined rafters a sky of freedom,
The clock convulsed among the spreading
beams

Yet it is I who impatiently regard
my watch
With frowns, not clearly gifted
To see above the wrecked train and the
sunken ferry
The broken cuckoo hang with mouth agape

Mercator

My Darling when you think of me
Think of me homeward, though I sail due west:
Think embers once again will burn
Behind these blue and restless eyes, as coals
Locked in your distance from a ship
are set
To whiten blindly yet must live, I live
Under your temperate breeze to flame
again
In all my noon-day and expanding heat
Beneath the level of eternal spring.

As a plant nourished by the laden air
Turns to its sun, so will my heart
Turn to the pacific of your everyday
That from America reveals its light
Reminding me of home, and aching, yet
must smile
At eyes that homesick give another scene
More real than jungle, as though
the carpet
Of our common wish had come to bring me home,
And I could see it swiftly through
the trees.

Believe, in the image of my course,
The map turns roundly, will bring me back:
Though ten years land me lost
They land me found upon your waiting banks
Where green grapes ripen sweetly
on the vine

I lay my starved and foundling mouth among,
And famished, ease within your atlas
glance
My hunger at your board, and sleep—
will sleep
Boxed in the native compass of your bed.

The Sea Lying Dead Tonight

The sea lying dead tonight
Is vacant, motionless as a lawn,
As though a river running
From inland had lost its power,
No longer hummed from falling levels
Taut, fluid as a telegraph wire—

And we from a chilled eminence
Looking seaward must fancy it desert,
Easy and smooth to our walking,
Though to descend as a goat
Would level the slope to its beaches,
A desert engulfed by its desert

And the nibble and nuzzle of currents
On sand must sigh like a child
To our sleep, who walk unawaking—
Debris of its drifted beach,
Bathers overslept in our sleeping
Taken unaware by the dark

Bound by the abandon of dunes
Beset by deceptive stars
We must keep it imaginative desert
Or fail like a fish in its depth,
We must keep to our pole in the dark
Or be eaten alive by its creatures—

Nor forget why we came,
Though a wind mournfully carries
Among the coarse grasses
The corrupt dead smell of the sea,
Recalling in pain to our senses
The dead human port across the bay.

KATHARINE SHATTUCK:

The Beast

She had been wakened at dawn by the pounding.

She sat up in bed and saw that the child in the next room was also sitting up, listening.

"What is that noise?" she cried and sank down, but the woman continued listening.

The horse hoofs had sounded on the stable floor all the previous evening in uneasy tread, but this was different—louder and more hollow and intermittent.

Light lay in the room in gray drifts, which feathered off, as she stared at them, into the scarcely discernible outline of chest, mantel, wall. The windows blurred grayer and grayer, but the pounding was insistent and at last she crept from the bed, leaving her husband asleep beneath the sheet.

So as not to disturb the child she went through the hall and unlocked the front screen, which was the only door they used in summer. At sight of the locked door she thought as she did every morning that locking yourself in was stupid since blackness seeped in through crack and keyhole, screen, shutter, and glass.

On the lawn in the mist the trees like smoke blew up. The whole visible world streamed in grayness, unfamiliar, though she saw it each morning, for she was a light sleeper and rose almost always at dawn.

The horse was in the stall which her husband had made for him at the rear of the house. At one time, they had discovered, it had been a large and commodious out-door toilet and housed the cesspool from the house as well, so that the floor was hollow, built over an excavation sixteen feet deep.

The night before it had seemed so right to have the horse looking out over the swinging doors into the yard, the long face with its white blaze and the unspeaking intelligence. She was afraid of horses as of all animals; yet they seemed chained and sad to her, unspeakably sad like the enchantments laid on princes in the fairy tales. Poor beast, poor horse, and prince or horse to be feared. Shuddering, she crossed herself, like a child exorcising evil.

She walked on the grass in her white gown and bare feet past the two lilac trees, which crumpled gray south of the house.

At the southwest corner of the house she stopped. She held the hard realness of the stone wall in her hand, as if it were talisman against the danger, unknown and impalpable, a hollow sound of pounding, a non-human, non-animal groaning, that lurked in the shadow across the lawn and beneath the row of elm trees rising beyond the stable.

Birds were waking. Roosters crowed on every farm along the valley. The cheering daylight sound did not disperse the shadow here on the hill, or interrupt the pounding, which must have come from the stable, although she

could not definitely locate it, or would not, feeling the urgency of her husband's displeasure if she were unable to tell him she had crossed the yard, unbolted the stable doors, removed the iron rod, and, flinging wide the doors, perceived in all its terror or pity or blackness whatever it was making the sound. He expected so much of her, demanding that she be upright and gay, young and old, all things in one; and she was not equal to being these things.

The doors banged out as if with bursting, and she caught one glimpse of the horse's head rearing; enough to tell her the trouble lay in the stable.

She ran back to the house, crouching in a white bundle on the steps of the porch. Her white face stared over the valley, which disappeared completely in the mist as the sun rose and the trees on the hill became solidly trees, green, blowing a little in the morning breeze, filled with the hidden, raucous cry of birds.

The pounding in the back yard continued.

It became now it was daylight the sound of a horse banging against the stable door. In trouble, she thought with sudden compassion and ran into the room where her husband lay, to wake him.

He came out of sleep slowly and sat up, seeing her before him as in a dream—colorless hair, pale face, startling great eyes.

"The horse!" she cried. "Something's happening to the horse."

Still in the envelope of sleep he stumbled into his shoes, tangling the laces until he gave up tying them. He pulled his trousers on and went swiftly through the house past the child, who was rousing now and crying Maggie for her mother.

It was a clear day. The mist was going in the valley. The hard outline of tree, building, shadow was sharp in the sun.

He ran to the stable and unbolting the doors saw what he already knew had happened, what he had known would happen. When he had first planned to put the horse in a stable at the house, Karl, the Bohemian farmer in the valley, had said you put your horse there she break through. The floor he won't hold her. I tell you. But he had gone ahead with his plans. He had been so eager to have the horse where he could ride him every day, where Maggie and the child could ride. But Maggie would be afraid. Unadmitted, it had been another test, another, perhaps the last grasping after the other days when Maggie was not afraid. Impalpable, untouchable, the past was going, going. All this he thought as he unbolted the doors and flung them wide.

With the doors open, the horse lay in the entry.

His body was wet, trembling, dark, his neck outstretched.

"Ginger!" The man knelt beside him.

In one glance he saw what had happened. A rotting plank, worked loose by the animal's tread, had tipped up with his weight. The right rear leg had plunged through the flooring near the wall, dangling clear to the groin in the hollow room beneath. The animal, struggling to stand on his forefeet, pawing the floor, chest and head rearing, struck in vain against the nothingness beneath, struggling. The great eyes strained as if with speech. Sweat streamed on his coat.

"Ginger!" the man cried. He brought him water, petted him. The quiver-
ing, terrified animal for one moment lay quiet, and then the forefeet began
again the horrible pounding in their struggle to stand, as if the horse dismem-
bered were struggling to walk. The hideous inarticulate animal cry sounded
again.

The man stopped at the house to answer his wife when she called to him.
The child was in her arms. Her long hair streamed over them both.

"I'll have to get Karl. He told me it would happen. We may have to get
the rendering plant truck. They've got a hoist. I don't know. I feel terrible.
It's my fault. I should have known."

He was young, almost boyish, almost innocent in his eagerness to make his
living real, naive in his believing.

He sped down the hill in his car.

The summer sun, high in freshness, had dried the dew. The outer trees on
the knoll beyond the drive were sharply delineated as trees, but within these
stood in black and deep shadow. The cows came up past them in a long
blond row.

"Karl's milked," he thought matter-of-factly against the strange skein of the
day.

Nights now were so bad that any daylight, however filled with danger, was
to be desired. To keep day and night separate—that was the thing—clearly
marked in divisibility; the one matter-of-fact, safe, ordinary, peaceful, dull even
the other filled with Maggie's crying. The line between light and darkness was
sudden. Something indefinable happened. Not a line in geography to be
crossed or perceived, it was the same air, the same place, but different.

She had been gay always, the happiest creature he had ever known, the
freest. He had counted on her the most, been surest of her. And now, silently
efficiently, she did her daylight tasks in grayness, crying at night. Scene after
scene filled his eyes, and now as if some demand too great were being made of
her, she was changing under his eyes. He could not understand.

He stopped the car and opened the gray lattice-work gate to the farm and
drove the car through. On either side were flowered banks of daisies, larkspur
horsemint.

Chickens were pecking in the road and fluttering ahead of him, squawking.

The dogs at the farmhouse barked and the farmer came out, chewing the
last cud of his breakfast.

"Gee Christ whiz!" he said and wiped his mouth with his hand.

He jumped into the car.

"That horse he'll kill himself," he said. "You get a son beetch hurry."

In the yard again he took charge.

Maggie, in her white gown, still holding the child, whom she had dressed,
however, cowered in the background beyond the grass-grown cistern head.

Karl, short, lively, wiry, dark, with coarse leathered skin and a back that
had lifted a loaded wagon sunk to its hubs in mud, fluttered around the horse
like an angry fly. The animal worn by his frantic and unavailing struggle lay
now with stretched neck on the stable floor, steaming sweat, its stench rising

in a vapor around him. He was a chestnut, large for a saddle horse, with a handsome beautifully blazed face.

"He'll kill himself." Karl twisted the horse's tail and heaved against the flank, but one man's strength was no match for a horse's weight.

They tore the flooring loose, and, lowering a ladder into the pit beneath the room, they descended into the ammonic stink below to watch the action of the horse's leg in its fight against the vague, the untouchable blackness beneath. Karl, unconvinced that brute force was not the answer, pushed against the hoof; and the horse, with the fearful reaching of the dying after air, struggled to stand, hoofs pounding, head straining, eyes starting.

The futile pounding forelegs gave up and he sank down.

The men scratched their heads, cursed, and tried new tactics. A block and tackle was like a child's idea. They tied a rope around the horse's belly and pulled at the forelegs as if to saw them off, so that the dismembered quarters could then be lifted out at will and be disposed of. The watching woman saw it and with a scream protested. Karl in one of his lightning leaps disappeared to the barn and returned with a huge drag chain, which they fastened to the bumper of the car and to the rope around the horse's middle. Then the man, maneuvering against his will, put the engine into low, reversed, pulled in low again—gasoline engine against horse, a cruelty the woman could not endure and she screamed again. The straining beseeching face of the animal wavered behind the blowing fumes of gasoline.

With five attempts they succeeded in dragging him half over the threshold. But at the moment the hind quarters came free, the foreleg went down into the hole, the momentarily released weight of the board giving like a child's teeter-totter. And then the horse gave up.

"She's a no go." Karl wiped the sweat from his face with the back of his hand and stood panting with the exertion of pushing at the horse. "She's a no go."

"I'll get some more men."

He jumped into the car and disappeared down the hill.

People were going to early mass in the valley. A common Sunday quiet lay on the air. At the foot of the hill he had to wait for a car to pass. People waved to him. He did not recognize them, did not respond. The thing—whatever it was—that was happening on the hill encased him in its shadow. On the edge of it stood Maggie, holding the child. He had not had time, he had not had the heart to go to her and with his arm about her suggest that she dress, leading her toward the house. She with the submissiveness that was so new in her, so frightening, would have gone, would have returned neatly dressed in a shirtwaist and skirt, her hair twisted in its knot behind—a woman and a stranger to him. Only in bed now did he know her. He could not define the change in her, could not discern its meaning. He rubbed the shadow away from his eyes and concentrated on the horse, the men he was to get, this actual thing that was to be done.

He crossed the bridge.

The river, dark brown where it did not reflect the banks, moved on its

sluggish inevitable way to the Mississippi. They had spent hours on the river together, swimming beside their canoe, lying on the cushions, watching the green closed world slide past. Now she was afraid of water and would not go, hating it with a violence out of all proportion to the fear even. He saw the small white face, the glittering eyes, the beating fists: "I will not go, I will not go." Her anger was not against him, he thought. It was some life sickness he could not grasp.

He turned to the left and stopped in the yard of a farmhouse on the edge of the town.

Slim Drummond stood beside his black car in the yard, paring his fingernails. He was dressed in black for church, but turned over the car keys to his eldest daughter when he heard of the accident, and came out in five minutes dressed in blue jeans and shirt. A wide-brimmed Stetson hat, old and greasy, was pushed back on his head. He was tall and as slim as a boy, but with an old man's face and powerful hands.

"Call Jim Roberts," he said. "Tell him to bring his hired man. A horse'll kill himself."

They went up the hill. Karl was working over the horse, which lay exhausted on the floor, in resignation worse than struggle. Karl's broad Bohemian face with its creased leather hide and black eyes recognized Slim's presence, but he did not speak.

The child was running in the yard, pattering, picking flowers, and the man picked her up and handed her to her mother, patting her arm and looking at her gravely.

"I think you'd better go inside, Maggie," he said.

Taking the child's hand she moved toward the house.

Whatever it was happening to the horse in the yard held her and she stopped by the house, identified with the struggle as if the horse by getting free would free her too from terror, this loneness she had stood in since she first knew two people could come no nearer than touch. It wasn't the work; it wasn't the fears even or that living was harder than she had thought. It was that you did it alone.

The men stood over the horse, silently appraising the work to be done.

A car roared on the hill, and Jim Roberts came around the house—a big man, thick of chest and strong, with a good-natured face. He pushed his hat back and scratched his head.

There was a moment of disagreement; Karl favored the block and tackle. But suddenly coordinated, as if the work to be done determined the method, making the many one, they took their places: the man at the head, tugging on the halter; Karl at the shoulder pushing; the other two at the tail, lifting it like a handle.

The great neck lay stretched on the threshold, trembling.

Woman and horse, one, waited an indefinable moment when, lifted in terror, they were not yet free.

In rhythm, in silence, and with tremendous effort, the men heaved the horse

out of the stall. Sliding free of the stable, the four legs lay stretched on solid ground, the head lay on the grass. The huge body was motionless, hardly a horse, as if by death disenchanted. Blood like sweat streaked the quivering groin.

"She's a beesiness," Karl panted, squinting at the underside of the horse, his hands on his knees. "He's a big. Get him up. Let him piss. He's a swelled."

The four men stood over the body, breathing. Karl pranced like a matador or an insect. "Get him up. She's a—"

"Let him lie a minute. Let him get his breath. Ginger. So boy." The man rubbed the muzzle and picking some clover gave it to the horse.

The men slapped and beat at the horse, calling the threats men use against animals in command; and at last the horse stood, wavering on its slender legs, crumpling, then solid. Nothing was broken then. The man gave him water to drink.

The woman came along the grass, leading the child by the hand, walking in her white nightgown, her bare feet showing beneath. Her hair, covering her shoulders, hung to her waist. The sun as if caught shone in it. The delicately boned face and great eyes were uplifted, the face was strange. Unhesitating, without fear, she came up to the horse and taking the head in her arms rubbed the muzzle with her face. The man, warmed in gratitude, put his arm on her shoulders.

"Poor Ginger," he said, feeling Maggie's hair against his face. His eyes stung. Everything was all right, he thought. Everything was going to be all right. He had been imagining fears. The horse's predicament had made him foolish.

She looked into the horse's face and said, "Poor horse, poor beast," and kissed it, rubbing the blaze with her cheek.

Karl seized the halter and led the horse up and down the yard. The legs were stiff. Blood bright red showed on the groin where the animal had been cruelly sawed as he had hung.

The woman, leaving the child, went back to the house.

Now the exertion was over, the return to commonness seemed a little silly. They pushed their hats back, wiped their faces. The man took a cigarette and handed the others each one.

"He's a beesiness," he said and they laughed in relief.

Smoke uptrailed in silly morning incense. A chicken was crowing. It was still morning, the same world. The floor of the stable was shattered and splintered, the grass on the threshold was pounded, hair from the horse's tail lay on the floor, but other sign of disaster there was none, he thought. Shadows lay in their accustomed order. On the clothes line at the edge of the yard a child's bib was blowing.

Karl led the horse down the hill to the barn.

Slim Drummond and Jim Roberts muttered they must be getting on.

The man caught up the child in his arms. He watched them drive away, the black Chrysler car shining in the sun in unmeaningful daylight reality.

The child patted his chin and said: "Your horse will be all right, Daddy. I think your horse will be all right."

A wren flew away from the cistern. The doors in the empty stall were open, banging a little in the wind.

The child in his arms was saying: "Your horse will be all right."

They went into the house.

She was sitting by the table in the kitchen.

He put his hand on her shoulder. "Are you all right, Maggie?"

She had knotted her hair behind and put on a blouse and skirt.

"Are you all right?"

Table and counters in the kitchen were scrubbed white. There were no shadows in the room. In the neat whiteness of stove, ice-box, walls there were no shadows.

"Are you all right?"

She turned. He saw the line of the cheeks he had loved for their roundness, the white plane of forehead beneath the hair.

"I'm all right," she said. She touched his hand with her face, giving him the talisman he wanted, knowing its worth.

DAVID NEWTON:

Two Songs for Serinette

1

Mild gold from fallow plaster snows
all year, a fall of yellow must
or pollen for the bronzing rose
of lover's hair; blood runs a rust
across an argent steel of dreams
grown sharp on scented salt and wine;
fresh foals a fever, fever screams
and woven flowers break the vine.

2

Flesh of peach and pitch of pine
fuse the heart, refuse the tongue
their flame and flower; tangerine,
the sugared snow of summer sing
down sleep, impress the silver lip
to cant the hour: days corrupt
the sounding water clock, but keep
a love where love all silent slept.

WILLIAM MARCH:

It's Your Hard Luck

There was a late spring that year, and only now, in June, had the trees come fully into leaf. Mist hung over the paths, and as we entered the park together it swirled and drifted reluctantly before our steady, advancing feet. We walked that morning with arms interlocked past the benches and the animal cages, pausing only to watch the rapid, hungry seals; we walked past the little cafe and through the culvert which led west, and when we came to our particular seat under the trees, against the solid rock itself, we laughed for no reason at all and sat down. Before us was the triangle of shrubs we knew well; beyond, there were benches so placed on the curving path that only their backs were visible to us.

Mally sighed and looked about her. "It all seems so freshly made and pretty this morning," she said. "So very pretty and so vague."

The two men who sat on a bench to our right went on with their talk. One of the men was petulant and untidy, and although it was warm he wore a muffler and an overcoat. The other was a well-washed, adolescent sailor with a starched cap set precisely on the back of his limp, flaxen hair. He was obviously on leave, for his uniform was so white, his shoes so polished and neat, that you knew at once that some fretful superior officer had inspected them only an hour or so before.

"What's the matter with this park?" asked the young sailor. "They told me you could meet girls here. I don't see any."

He turned his body with one quick movement, peering about him with intense, speculative eyes. The gesture stretched his tight, immaculate uniform more closely to his flesh, bringing sharply into relief the flat precision of his shoulder bones, the young, stringy muscles of his thighs, the small, plump thimble of his sex.

"They'll be along directly," said the man. "It's something you can be sure of."

The sun broke through at that moment, and with it the heavy pigeons flew down from the sycamore trees. They stood warily in the path before the sailor and his companion, not daring as yet to venture too near, and gazed at them sidewise with an expectant, thoughtful stupidity.

"I know plenty about military life," said the man finally. "I ought to, God knows, because I put in two years during the last war. But it wasn't in the navy. It was in the army. I can't say I got along well, but I wasn't as dumb as they tried to make out later."

Suddenly the sailor shoved his thin, wiry legs toward the pigeons. "Go on, beat it!" he said. "We haven't got anything for you!"

The pigeons fell backward in alarm and lifted upward a little, their wings

anchoring them above the path, their tail feathers spread wide for balance and sucked inward, like the tight, protective tails of shrimp.

"As a matter of fact," continued the veteran, "I wasn't dumb at all. My trouble was I didn't do thinks like others, and not doing things like others don't get you far in the army."

The sailor relaxed and yawned. "I do things the way everybody else does them," he said in a bored voice.

The pigeons settled on the path once more, but nearer the curb this time; and then, as if the ground beneath them had fallen away, they rose upward with a rush and flew through the trees and the triangle of shrubs before us. We saw, then, that while we had been listening to the sailor and his companion a stranger had taken his seat on the curved line of benches to our left, and Mally, watching the pigeons wheel and flutter above him, said: "It's somebody they know well; somebody they were expecting."

From where we were only the stranger's back and head were visible. He wore a peaked cap so unusual in design, so eccentric in appearance, that it was, obviously, the outer symbol of some deepseated crochet in the mind of its owner. It was a dull, birdlike brown and it fitted tightly against the stranger's fragile, rounded skull. For a moment the man sat quietly, ignoring as best he could the rumbling voices of the pigeons above him; but at last he jerked back his neck and said in an intense, piping voice: "Let me alone. I want nothing to do with you."

He had a bag of grain in his hands, and an instant before the pigeons discovered him and circled excitedly above his head he had apparently been trying to make three ragged, shivering sparrows come forward and accept the food which he had brought for them; but they were too frail, too timid to claim what was rightfully theirs, and they remained in safety beside the curb, blowing out their feathers and cocking their shrewd, nervous heads from side to side. At that moment the pigeons descended in a shifting mass of color and pecked at the grain with their precise, flexible necks, crowding the sparrows from the path and onto the grass itself. When the last kernel was eaten, the pigeons looked up at their benefactor and made their expectant, oily noises; and since he threw them no more food they lifted once more and settled with a sliding motion upon his peaked cap, his shoulders, and even upon his tense, out-thrust arm. Then the sailor and his friend went on with their talk.

"This will give you an idea of what I mean," said the old soldier. "They said I could never do anything right, but after the fighting around Soissons they changed their tune a little. So they decided to make a corporal out of me. So I got my warrant in due time and the supply sergeant issued me some chevrons to sew on my sleeves."

The stranger made a sudden, threatening gesture at the pigeons and said: "Go away. Nobody invited you, did they? Don't you know when you're not wanted?" But the pigeons merely fluttered beyond the reach of his arms and peered at him contemptuously, but without malice.

"So when the time came to sew on my chevrons," continued the veteran,

"I didn't put them on with the point toward the shoulders, which was according to regulations, but the other way round—with the point aimed at the elbow. And so the sergeant called me in when he saw how I'd sewed on my chevrons and said to me, 'How does it happen you put your chevrons on upside down?' And I said, 'It depends on what you call upside down. If I was in the British army it wouldn't be considered upside down at all. What we do would be upside down.'"

"'But you're not in the British army,' he said to me, 'and you never were.' 'That doesn't change the situation one way or the other,' I said. So then he got mad and shouted out, 'It looks like anybody would know how to sew on chevrons without even being told!' And then I said, 'Not necessarily so.'" The old soldier spat moodily across the path and became silent.

Beyond the triangle of shrubs, the man in the peaked cap stared with distaste at the pigeons, making threatening gestures in their direction with his rolled newspaper; then, believing perhaps that he had intimidated them, he poured more grain into his palm and tossed it where the sparrows were huddled together on the grass. "Take it," he said. Don't let them get this away from you too." But with the movement of his arm the pigeons dipped downward, pushing the sparrows away from the lawn, forcing them back, with their bulk, to the place where the shrubs began. The stranger became excited when he saw what had happened. "Stand up for your rights, you fools!" he called out in his shrill, piping voice. "If the pigeons push you, push them too!"

But the alarmed sparrows flew up and sat among the branches of the shrubs, shivering and swaying back and forth.

When the last kernel of grain was eaten the pigeons swarmed over the stranger once more. This time he sat quietly, making no move to dislodge them; then, angrily, he emptied the bag of grain in the path and said: "I don't care which of you gets it! What concern is it of mine?"

He shook himself and got up from the bench—and we saw him plainly for the first time. He was a small man indeed, hardly four feet tall. His back was straight enough, but his chest curved forward in a plump arc, like the breast of a bird, and as if to heighten the illusion, he wore a gray suede vest which fitted precisely beneath his throat. For the rest, he was dressed in varying shades of brown, and the tails of his eccentric, old-fashioned coat lay neatly behind him, like folded wings.

"Why waste my time on you?" he said grandly. "Really, you are beneath my contempt!"

Then, as he approached us on his thin, dried-out legs, I understood why he envied and hated pigeons, why he loved and despised sparrows; for he was not, as I had so ingenuously thought, the frailest of men: he was, instead, the strongest of birds. He passed our bench proudly and walked toward the culvert, while the endless tale of the old soldier came to our ears once more.

"They broke me from corporal and put me back in the ranks," he was saying. "I tried to explain things to the top sergeant, but he wouldn't even listen to me. 'If the shape of your mind is different from regulations, it's your

hard luck,' he said, 'and not mine.' "

The sailor glanced earnestly at his nails and lit a cigarette. "I do things like everybody else," he said, "What's the sense of acting any other way?"

Above us, where the boulders were, there came a burst of forced, sudden laughter. Instantly the young sailor re-set his cap and smoothed down his white, immaculate uniform; and without a word of explanation to his companion, as if leave-taking were an act beyond his will, an experience too complex for him to attempt, he vaulted the bench and began climbing the boulder, at whose top the young girls awaited him.

The veteran seemed not at all surprised at the abrupt departure of his acquaintance. He merely rubbed his chin for a moment and then, wanting to finish his story, he turned toward us, but we pretended not to see him, since there was little point in our hearing the end of a story which we already knew. Instead, we focused our eyes on the man in the peaked cap, watching him as he walked jerkily down the path.

Already the pigeons had devoured the food which he had scattered, and now they flew in a cloud above his head. They would not leave him alone, no matter how greatly he threatened them. They merely rose upward beyond the reach of his arm and anchored themselves in the air, gazing at him with vacant affection. Their rolling voices were liquid and flattering in their throats, but their wings, fanning against the air, made a thin, contemptuous sound.

" 'It's your hard luck!' " continued the old soldier. "That's what the sergeant said to me. 'If you're not like everybody else, it's your hard luck! And now get the hell out of here!' "

DEAN JEFFRESS:

Poem

Here trains explore the future: children stare:
The rain falls toward the earth but does not stay:
Like a night-train the sun extends its bleak
And yellow curve to close the winter day.

Now softly from the city towers, like smoke,
The ermine beggars creep into the town,
And carry papers with them that cry murder,
And light the lamps before the night is down.

They watch the crystal cuckold mount the sky
And pace horn-mad above the crowd of hills,
And hear the mongrels bark but do not know
Whether for his or theirs or other ills.

HENRY MILLER:

Let Us Be Content with Three Little New-Born Elephants

"Everything was working towards its destiny: the trees, the plants, the sharks. All— except the Creator!" Thus sings Lautréamont in the third canto wherein the Omnipotent is made to assume the role of He Who Gets Slapped. But that was all long ago, as Isidore himself says, only to add quickly: "but I think he knows where I am now." (I wonder.) And then, in one of the most revelatory passages of the entire work, he continues: "He avoids my place and we both live like two neighboring monarchs who are aware of one another's respective powers, cannot overcome one another, and are weary of the useless battles of the past."

Like two neighboring monarchs! Or, The Ego and his Own . . .

Maldoror[1] deals almost exclusively with God the Omnipotent One. God in man, man in God, and the Devil take the hindmost. But always God. This is important to stress, because should it become overnight a best seller (due to those by-products so hungrily sought after by Anglo-Saxons, viz., lust, cruelty, vice, hate, vindictiveness, rage, violence, despair, ennui, rape, etc.), God may be forgotten and only the ferocious little Isidore Ducasse, alias the Comte de Lautréamont, remembered. God had a hand in the creation of this book, as he did in the creation of *A Season in Hell, Flowers of Evil* and other so-called disturbing works, which are disturbing only because we are loath to recognize the shadow as well as the majesty of the Almighty. It is most important to emphasize this because, unless the miracle happens or Chance be defeated, some obscure and innocent printer will, like Etienne Dolet, take the rap and go to the gibbet.

Almost seventy-five years after the appearance of this infamous work (which, incidentally, failed to establish a precedent for the *Hundred and Twenty Days*) an eminent American lawyer, elated over the decision rendered by Judge Woolsey (James Joyce vs. America), raves publicly in a Foreword to a cheap edition of Ulysses, about the body-blow then (1933—year of forgotten miracles) delivered the censors. "The necessity," says he, "for hypocrisy and circumlocution in literature has been eliminated. Writers need no longer seek refuge in euphemisms. They may now describe basic human functions without fear of the law." This is precisely what the young Isidore did. He asked no quarter and he gave none. His predecessor was Jonathan Swift and his chief executor was the Marquis de Sade who spent most of his life in jail. Isidore escaped with a whole skin by dying young. In time he came to be for André Breton and his group what Rimbaud was for Claudel and the unknown galaxy to follow.

Baudelaire was a rain of frogs, Rimbaud a nova (which still blazes), and

[1] *Maldoror* by Lautréamont, translated by Guy Wernham. New Directions.

Lautréamont a black messenger heralding the death of illusion and the nightmare of impotence to follow. Had there been only these three sinister luminaries in the whole of the nineteenth century that century would have claim to being one of the most illustrious in all literature. But there were others—Blake, Nietzsche, Whitman, Kierkegaard, Dostoievski, to cite just a few. In the middle of this amazing century a border line was crossed, and there will be no returning. Almost every European nation, and even America, contributed to this putsch: it was the century of great gangsters in every walk of life, in every realm, including the celestial.

The three great bandits were Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Lautréamont. And now they have become sanctified. Now we see that they were angels in disguise. Seventy-five years behind time, like a derailed train which finds its own way, even through Pontine marshes, cemeteries and the crooked deals of financiers, Lautréamont arrives in America. (He arrived at least once before, if I am not mistaken, but passed unnoticed. Just as Breton moves along Third Avenue, New York, looking into junk shop windows, entirely unnoticed.)

"I go on existing, like basalt! In the middle as in the beginning of life, angels resemble themselves: how long it has been since I ceased to resemble myself!" Thus he laments in the fourth canto, which opens: "It is a man or a stone or a tree about to begin the fourth canto." *It is.* It is like nothing ever before invented, not even the Fourth Eclogue of Vergil. But so indeed are the other cantos. They do not even resemble one another: they are angel-lamps. Sometimes they "bellow like vast flocks of buffaloes from the pampas." Or they spout sperm, like the sperm whale. Or they impersonate themselves, like "The Hair" which the Creator left behind in the brothel, to his great embarrassment. To get the true flavor of them one has to visualize this young Montevidean (who "probably died of some respectable bourgeois disease induced by his unhealthy and Bohemian habits of life") pounding the piano as he composed them. They are French only in the language chosen. There is something Aztec, something Patagonian, in all of them. Something too of Tierra del Fuego, which lies buried like a dislocated toe in the chill waters that wrap it round. And perhaps too something of Easter Island. Not perhaps—*certainly,* most certainly.

What I wonder is not how the Anglo-Saxon will take this book, but how the Oriental will. Tamerlane could not have inspired in his own people the feelings he awakened in the peoples he slaughtered. Similarly, Ramakrishna has become for the Westerner a sort of "monster" of ecstasy. Lautréamont, following his own example exclusively, took the European gong (which had been sounding its own death knell for centuries) and literally kicked the gong around. This does not make him in the least like Cab Calloway, nor Minnie the Moocher. It makes him more and more like Lautréamont, which (to us) is insufferable.

It might be called a new Bible, written from a new Sinai, expressly for "the boa of absent morality and the monstrous snail of idiocy." The mysterious brothers are implicated, as well as the neighboring monarchs—*and the angel-*

lamp. Nor can we ignore his first cruel love, the shark, with all her fins. Marvelous. Marvelous throughout, and not like the ink spots—just here and there. Pluto rising, God and man sealed in one death. Enter now the janissaries of Satan and his camelot the machine. Enter the weird birds and beasts from North America. Enter Broken Blossom and Broken Brow, followed in strict sequence by that movie which we are still making, called "The Slaughter of the Innocents."

Rimbaud was doomed at birth—he hadn't the ghost of a chance. Yet no one had noticed, prior to his coming, that the sun was burned out. *Now,* do you hear it plainly?—piteous moans smothered in sea wrack. Frabjous caterwauls, since the snails (shorn of their temples) are out in force. Oh yes, there will be more delightful little works of fantasy—that man all in black, Lewis Carroll, for instance—but the horse has been definitely disembowelled. Look no more for drunken boats, or Armageddons where dragon and eagle fight it out. Don't look for doubt's duck with the vermilion lips, because we are all out of that flavor.

Suddenly, as if a volcano had erupted under the floor of a boudoir, just when France is about to receive her first mortal blow, comes a burst of passion black as pitch. Passion, I say, and not luke-warm **** from a printer's soiled bladder. All personal feuds have passion, even if the feud is only with the Creator. Isidore had one feud, one passion. He was alone. But *alone,* mind you, and that in a world where even to take a walk, as one French genius put it laconically, costs money. There was no sadder world than the world of the nineteenth century—for those who had wings. What does one do in such periods? One takes wing. One flees. One sails aloft with the albatross. But whither? *That* we are just beginning to discover. *Wing it first,* that's the moral of the nineteenth century. And leave the world of snails and boas to sink like a diseased cork.

It is the habit of critics to deal with style and such things. There is no style here to talk about. It was out of style even before it was written. Understand, please, that we are dealing with a Bedouin in a button factory. We have, if you insist, the ode, the litany, the apostrophe, the invective, the jeremiad, the bromide, the round dance, the refrain, the revolver shot, the death and the resurrection, the apocrypha, the curse and the maul, together with the vocabulary of a diamond cutter pickled in Malmsey—all in full glory like a six-masted schooner. There is also the foam on the beer, even the louse, if you are itchy. You will learn nothing from analyzing these ingredients and scaffoldings. Some one crucified himself: that's all that matters. And he had an evil name, worse than it sounds. (But it always rings like a tocsin, no matter what the language!) You will also find tenderness in these cantos, and abysmal humility. And if you have never travelled to the nadir, then here is the opportunity.

When Isidore took himself to Paris the whole world was rolling down hill. A veritable toboggan slide, but taking place in the Unconscious, as we imagine. A right jolly *dégringolade* it was. So jolly that some, like Wordsworth, Tennyson and other infatuates, were sticking their toes through Heaven's

bangled tambourine. Then began a series of the most unethical assassinations, now taking on the proportions of a pogrom. (We're still at the threshold . . . livelier things are in store, don't fret.) When the split could no longer be concealed a fusion took place, a piece of expert welding, and dream and reality —like two boxers in the arena—shook hands. The man who had sawed the two realms apart folded up like a jack-knife. It was as if he had sawed the Virgin Mary in two on a busy street, fired a revolver to summon the police, waited calmly for the next bus, and then at some unpredicted *carrefour* transferred to a vehicle more to his liking. Ordinarily, were such a man apprehended, he would be put in a strait-jacket. Not Isidore. He lives beyond apprehension. He writes those advertisements in the sky which when read backwards always spell Maldoror. A golden roar of pure spite, malice, vituperation. In it is the roar of gold—pure gold, not gleet-gold. And in it too is pure evil, not the counterfeit of spinsters and clericals. (How little genuine evil is in the world! And how much gold! And what do all these black crucifixes mean?)

"NOW WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF REALITY, INSOFAR AS THE TARANTULA IS CONCERNED."

The style, the effect, the intent, everything about this black bible is monstrous. So is the image of Kali. So is mathematics, if only you would think about it. So are the good deeds of little men. So are the legends of heroes. And so finally and inevitably is the Creator, seen from here below. Otherwise would it not be too simple, like a beautiful dream, say, that had turned sour? And why not monsters now and then, in a world packed with fools and angels? In the evil tongue of Maldoror—"I shall advise them to **** *** ***** of crime, since *another* has already done it." Not the language of the court, to be sure. but then we are not dealing with a charlatan.

So, in the middle of the nineteenth century, just when the Minnesingers seemed to have a clear field, a time bomb went off. It was like a most horrendous ****. It splattered too. And that is how almost a century later—how swift is progress!—we have a beautiful mauve edition of an infernal machine which, in exploding the caul, blew up the embryo as well. That is why we all resemble one another so disgustingly, even when we are not beautiful and maimed. That is why we are so many BB bullets hitting the same target and always the bull's eye. The bull doesn't even blink. Nobody blinks or winks. It's a shambles, with the bull's eye remaining wide open, staring ceaselessly and remorselessly. What happened never occurred, because it was a bad dream. It hangs like a flitch of bacon and rots. It points the azimuth. In the end it will make that most delightful of all mathematical figures, the asymptote. And there approximately you have it in a nut-shell.

WALLACE FOWLIE:

Shadow of Doom: an Essay on Henry Miller

I believe that the quality which first attracted me in Mr. Miller's writing was his violence. Not the violence of things said, but the violence of the way in which they were said. The violence of feeling has become in his work the violence of style which has welded together all of his disparate passions and dispersed experiences into the one experience of language. He has said in *The Wisdom of the Heart* that he doesn't believe in words, but in language, "which is something beyond words" (p. 23). Writing is a kind of complete celebration for him in which shattered parts of experience are put together, in which elements are fused. These elements are not, however, fused into a system of thought and experience which can be learned or understood. They can only be "realized," more and more intuitively. Miller reveals in his art, to a remarkable degree, the gift of immediacy. His hungers of the present are never over. They never become past hungers to be recalled. From this vision of life, which is one self-perpetuating uninterrupted experience, comes his writing, integrated with the flowing steadiness of life, pulsating with the newness and the sameness of each day, incapable of being codified and explicated in accordance with the rules of "periods," of "genres," of "themes."

In rereading recently the brilliant correspondence exchanged between Henry Miller and Michael Fraenkel, published under the title *Hamlet,* I had, more clearly than ever, the conviction that Miller is a leading example of a special kind of writer produced only by our age. I mean the writer who is essentially seer and prophet, whose immediate ancestor was Rimbaud and whose leading exponent was D. H. Lawrence. It is not insignificant that Henry Miller considers the poet whose perceptions and visions blotted out his language, Arthur Rimbaud, one of the greatest writers, and that he is now engaged upon the writing of a critical study of Lawrence.

What characterizes this new artist is perhaps his vulnerability to experiences. He exposes himself to them all in a kind of propitiatory frenzy as though he needs literally to know everything before he can understand adequately any single part of human experience. In a more histrionic sense than ever before, the modern artist is the scapegoat who feels physically the weight of the world's sins and who performs in his life the role of the clown. He relives all the incarnations of the hero which he calls, in his more modest language, his masks. His roles are as multiple as his genres. Rimbaud called himself: "saltimbanque, mendiant, artiste, bandit,—pretre!" (juggler, beggar, artist, bandit,—priest: *Une Saison en Enfer*). Lawrence wrote novels, short stories, essays, poems, plays, books of travel and philosophy. Henry Miller's writing is autobiography, fiction, philosophy, criticism. He is, in a special sense which we shall try to define, novelist, saint, critic, voluptuary, and perhaps now destined to be a poet.

The word *schizophrenia* is hardly sufficient to define the divisionings of the modern artist's sensitivity and the seemingly autonomous realms of his action. The Hamlet complex appears rudimentary when viewed from the intricately partitioned experience of a Rimbaud, of a Lawrence, and of a Henry Miller! The reasons for this reduplicated role of the artist are difficult to state because they are so deeply imbedded in the spiritual problems of our age which, although they explain us, do not explain themselves to us. But perhaps we see enough to realize that our age of defeat over which man, if he is to exist at all as an artist, must triumph. This triumph of the modern artist over his defeated age was once called an escape or, by the more clinical word, escapism. We know better now. The age whose parts are so ill-fused and dislocated has had to be dominated, not by the solitary man in his ivory tower, a term of castigation exploited by politicians and all the lesser breeds of men, but by the artist who has had to reassemble in himself all the shattered parts of the world.

The modern artist, more admirably and more insistently than ever before in the history of art, is the fusion of dreamer and hero. Because of the wounded and divided age in which he lives, he has become the fusion of the enemy brothers Dionysus and Apollo. The ardor of Dionysus and the wisdom of Apollo,—that is, the body and the spirit, the earth and the sun, woman and man,—have been united in the modern artist in remarkably even proportions. In the creation of his art, the artist always begins with Dionysus and moves toward Apollo. That is, he always begins with chaos and moves toward order. It is impossible to have in art solely the orgiasm of Dionysus or solely the elevation of Apollo. The faun who plays on the flute is an excellent example of what I mean. The image of the orgiastic faun learning to know order and harmony describes the legend of all creative art.

Our divided and impaired age has produced in spite of itself such unified and triumphant artists as Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, and Henry Miller, who have transcended it by being of it more creatively and more spiritually than the age's so-called and falsely-denominated "leaders." These writers, in each of their books, have done two things. They have written their own autobiography and they have composed the history of their age. They have been accused of retreating to their ivory tower and turning their backs on the politics of the moment, but in reality, they were approaching more and more closely to the meaning of their age. They were learning less and realizing more. Rather than trying to rule the world with greed and emasculated philosophies, they were learning how to accept the world. The acceptance of the world is the first necessary triumph which precedes the love of the world and the love of the world's Creator.

In his frank acceptance of the world, the modern artist learned to perceive in it the forces of evil as well as the forces of good, and hence to prepare himself for the particular role of prophet which he has played so consistently and so brilliantly. The very title of Mr. Miller's book, *The Wisdom of the Heart,* is a key to the artist's function, and in it, on page 45, there is a sentence which

might well be a sermon text for this essay: "We are in the group of demonic forces created by our own fear and ignorance." The little man who is terrified, and who is in reality greater than that which terrifies him is the choreographic objectification of the artist. He is the homunculus who is physically crushed by the world but who spiritually dominates the world in his quest for the absolute. The heroes whom Henry Miller talks about the most are all the same type of passionate clown: Rimbaud and Lawrence, Charlie Chaplin and Raimu, Gary Cooper as Mr. Deeds, Christ and Saint Francis, Miller himself as the hero in *The Tropic of Cancer*. When he writes about the French, it is always about the little man and the insignificant—who is, nevertheless, the microscopic greatness of a civilization: the garcon de café, the store proprietor, the whore, the pimp (cf. *Vive la France* in *Hemispheres,* Nos. 2-3, 1944).

On the homunculus falls more tragically than on the proud and successful the shadow of doom announced by Spengler and Lawrence. To a certain extent, Henry Miller continues the prophetic role of these two writers, but preaches infinitely less. Oswald Spengler, the prophet of cyclical history, D. H. Lawrence, the psychologist of love and sex, and Henry Miller, the visionary who perceives his wisdom in the microcosm of the heart, are all contained in the boy-prophet Arthur Rimbaud. The French poet discovered a meaning in the cycles of history and races before Spengler, and attained the virile purity which Lawrence sought to reestablish in the body of man, and played under his masks of hyena, convict, and pagan the role of Miller's homunculus who sees because he suffers.

So the shadow of doom announced by the modern prophets and which is falling over all of humanity today, was first articulated in the voice of Rimbaud which continues to speak in the visionaries who have succeeded him, of whom Henry Miller is perhaps the leading contemporary. The prophet and the visionary is the man who daily lives the metaphysical problems of his age. He bears them in him and undergoes their suffering. Writing becomes for him, then, a very special and necessary torture. A daily expiation for his age which he performs innocently and ineluctably. The metaphysical torment of today which Miller seems to feel the most persistently is the loss throughout the world of the great fact of living. In the manifold ways and patterns of living which modern man is always inventing, he has forgotten that to live is of prime importance.

How to live is the theme of all prophets. Peace is always the goal; and around the word *peace* cluster the plans and the dreams, the intuitions and the burning designs of those men who see into the heart of the living and into the future. The peace of the world is for Henry Miller associated with Paris because there it is more possible for man, so divided in his natural heritage of today, to become one as artist. In their creative activity, even if not always in their lives as men, some of the most notable among contemporary artists have attained a unity thanks to the spiritual role of Paris, last of the great modern cities where it was possible to live without spending one's life devising ways and policies of living. It is impossible to measure the peace of Paris in the

work of Frenchmen like Proust, Cocteau, Rouault; of the Irish James Joyce of the Russian Chagall and Tchelitchew; of the Spanish Picasso; of th American Gertrude Stein, Hemingway, and Henry Miller. From some we spring of ancient liberty, Paris has safeguarded a fertile power in the unit of her native and assimilated artists who, not only in the accomplishment c their work but in their understanding of man, defy the usual contemporar waywardness and bifurcations.

As an artist, Miller has been able to see the discordant elements of ou world to such a degree of clarity that he has freed himself from them. He ha attained in his writing to the purity of obscenity, as Proust attained to the purit of immorality, as Baudelaire atatained to the purity of *acedia,* as Dante attaine to the purity of hell. There has been throughout the history of America literature an uninterrupted preoccupation with the theme of evil, treated from special viewpoint of horror and awesomeness and fixation. Poe, Melvill Hawthorne, Djuna Barnes, and Julian Green in his French novels, are unite in their conception of evil as being a sense of dark foreboding and the plottin of malign spirits. A dantesque or Catholic conception of evil is vastly differe from that expressed in *Ethan Brand* or *Nightwood* or *Le Visionnaire* whe evil is a tortured and introverted subjectivism. The American sense of ev comes from a special kind of fear of God which is a form of pride, and fro an unwillingness to think of God as the absolute source of good which cann be fully realized but which is at all times able to dissipate evil. I belie that the work of Henry Miller (and by *work* I mean his presence, his spir and the profoundest meaning of his books) has interrupted the tradition American treatment of evil. The obvious reason for Miller's novels' not bein published in America, and therefore not being accessible to the America public, is the obscenity of their language. But this violence was needed— some comparable violence—to redirect the American consciousness of evil. T obscenity in Miller's two *Tropics* is a form of medication and catharsis, a extroversion needed after all the books of puritanical foreboding. Both Mille dissoluteness in language and his fixation on the physical possession of woma are means of liberating himself from the Hamlet-soul which has dominated t literary heroes of Europe and America during the long period between t politically unrealized revolution of 1789 and World War II.

II

"And always am I hungry," writes Henry Miller in *The Wisdom of t Heart* (p. 188). Alimentary and sexual hunger are one kind, and spiritu hunger is another. Sexual hunger is expressed in Miller's writing by means obscenity. Because this is purely carnal, it has the savor of death and disso tion. It is a strong projection of the symbol of doom. Woman is the object this hunger. Mr. Miller proves countless times how much more she is than t object of sexual hunger. She is a kind of test both of the reality of man a of his function. The long line of heroes extending from Hamlet to Char Chaplin and Donald Duck who have been awkward in the presence of wom and unable to express themselves in love, has developed in woman a false r

of dominator which D. H. Lawrence was among the first to castigate. Lawrence was devoted to love, and Miller is devoted to life, but both fear woman's role in the modern world and her usurping of man's position. Hence their treatment of woman, in order to undermine her role of mother for her husband and of frigid goddess for her lover. Lawrence treats woman as wife who is essentially mistress, and Miller treats woman as prostitute. Their use of woman, rather than restoring her to her natural role, has become just one other perversion, comparable to man's excessive love for his mother, as in Proust, and his excessive hate for his mother, as in Rimbaud, a love and hate which tends to lead to two kinds of sexual perversion.

Henry Miller knows that there is no solution to the problem of man's sexual hunger separate from the problem of man's spiritual hunger. He writes in his book, *The World of Sex:* "I am essentially a religious person, and always have been" (p. 6). Flashes everywhere in his writing testify to a sensitivity which worships. This man is devoted in so deep a sense that his nature has become religious. I mean by this that every action and every word, no matter how seemingly inconsequential, have a meaning for him and a part in the wholeness of things. The visionary is always akin to the religious because to see the plenitude of the cosmos is to love it and accept it. To read Henry Miller has always been for me to discover a kind of peace in the world. He is the one contemporary writer who has driven out from his nature all traces of hamletism, and yet he writes constantly about Hamlet. About Hamlet as death-sower.

All the aspects of Miller's art and his nature are unified. He is one person, one visionary. His vision is multiple and changing and even contradictory. But that is as it should be. That is life. Love is something else and Miller has defined it admirably in *The World of Sex:* "Love is the drama of completion, of unification" (p. 48). The visionary is always the man able to think in terms of mankind and to love all men as one element of the universe. He is not always able to love individual men. The purpose of life itself attracts him more than the complexities of any single existence. That is why he is dispensed from the usual duties of honesty. Mr. Miller's violent attacks on Catholicism may be explained in part by his lack of honesty in acknowledging the effort of the Church and individuals in the Church to purify the world. In his vision, details and debts are forgotten, and he sees only the dark results of corruption and the blazing projects of rejuvenation. In a recent letter to me, he writes: "Vision is the thing. The world of the spirit is too vast and deep for mere honesty to be of much value." (March 24, 1944.)

The love of the visionary is his vision. And God is at the end of his vision, although not always visible, as God is in the innermost being of every man, although very often not discovered there. God is always at the source, whether it be the source of man's being, as for artists like Baudelaire and Dostoievski, or the source of the universe, as for visionary artists like Blake, Picasso, and Henry Miller. We are what we wish to be, what we will to be. And we are thus for eternity. For the contemplative artist and religious, prayer is God reached. For the visionary artist and prophet, vision is God reached. *Qui non diligit manet in morte.* (I *Johannis* III:14.)

ROSEMARY PARIS:

Rehearsal for Invasion

There are two islands in the Atlantic which form between them a long narrow bay, with a channel at either end where the rip tide froths the water. There were once hotels here and whaling boats and carriages jogging along the sandy roads. But that was long ago and now the wind over the plain meets only grass and bayberry bushes. Between blue sky and bluer water quick white gulls wheel and dive for fish. They make the only sound besides the placid lapping of the waves along the shore and the far-away drumming of ocean breakers.

But one day, quite suddenly, the silence was shattered. A covey of landing barges nosed into the bay with a roar of motors that reverberated from shore to shore. When they neared a narrow spit of land that made a shallow inner bay within its curve, they gathered off shore in a worried cluster, all comings and goings and angry mutters of motors revved up and then allowed to subside into under-water grumblings and puffs of smoke. Finally, somehow reassured, they took turns approaching the shore in trios, confident now and speeding ahead in a tossing of foam until they breasted the sand. There the front lip of the barges lowered so that the troops inside could disembark.

The men lumbered across the beach, scuffing the sand with their heavy boots, to plump their packs down on grass and bayberry bushes. Some were in khaki and others in blue fatigues, but they were all monstrously swollen by helmets and life-jackets, and they moved stiffly as if they were not accustomed to walking. The empty barges backed away to be replaced by others.

In spite of the din of barge motors and the confusion of new arrivals, there were immediately little centers of correlated activity. Tent poles appeared from nowhere and were hammered into the ground. The canvas tents flapped restlessly as they were being hoisted, and even after they were securely tied there were shivers of wind across them. One of the bigger barges disgorged a jeep that began at once to dash spasmodically here and there among the men. A single file of men trickled out over the plain to chop down the scattering of stunted pines. As they walked back to the cook tent only the branched trees could be seen moving, as if each had legs of its own.

Then from farther along the bay beyond the point came a new sound. Here were other troops beached for landing practice. In sharp silhouette against the horizon, dwarfed by the distance, they bunched and scattered unaccountably. The wind brought their voices in brief crescendos, like the noise of a crowd at a football game. Overhead the gulls slid into the wind's current and screeched protestingly.

Among the earlier arrivals there were three men sitting alone and to one side, not far from where others were digging a fox-hole with a flurry of spades

and sand. One of the three lay on his back, lifting his head now and again above the thick fine-bladed grass. The other two sat side by side with their helmets in their laps. They might have been quite alone on the flat plain, sitting with the heels of their boots dug into the sand. They might even have been bathers taking the sun before a swim. But before long an empty barge came to shore and without a word they stood up, bending under their packs and flinging over their shoulders as well the dangling rolls of pup tent, clothing and blanket. They trudged with heads down across the sand and into the boat. The lip snapped to behind them and the barge stirred up a tangle of seaweed as it backed away and swivelled its blunt nose to the west.

It was the last barge to leave and its roar drifted gradually away. The sun was setting now. The ebbing tide left delicate tufts of flame-colored seaweed to gleam among wet stones. The men beyond the point disappeared as suddenly as they had come, as if they had been snatched into the sea. In the dying wind the cook-tent smoke rose straighter and straighter into the air, smudging the tent's orange flank.

The men were quieter now, their work done, and they clustered near the cook tent with metal plates in their hands. A crowded jeep nosed into the road to town and disappeared in a smothering of dust. One or two of the men with their trousers rolled up stood like children in the shallow water or skipped pebbles across it. The pale sky to the west turned gold and pink and lavender.

When night settled there were no lights in the camp. But in the hush of darkness there was a restless stirring, a murmur of voices, an occasional excited laughter.

The respite was brief, for with the early dawn the barges grumbled back down the bay. On shore the tents were packed, the poles uprooted, the breakfast fires smothered with sand. When the barges reached the shore the patient lines of men filed aboard. As the barges backed away the troops sitting deep in the hold looked like ninepins. Only the helmsman was human, swinging his unwieldly barge with a flick of his wrist, and standing with legs braced as it sped away.

When the last echo of the barges had faded, the gulls swooped down to rock lazily on the waves off shore as if something in the churned up water and floating seaweed demanded their attention. It was very still. The sky was low and the water grey and sullen.

Over the sand and the trampled grass of the camp site were the usual leavings: cans, papers, corn cobs. There were several upheavals where well-meaning efforts had been made to bury refuse and fill in fox-holes. A large, partially filled hole was only too obviously what it was because the nearby bushes were festooned with toilet paper.

Here and there were other scraps of paper. "Dear Joe, I've just been down to B'klyn . . . . " and a little farther on, typed in red ink: "Have a ceegar Mr. Clements."

At the spot where the three soldiers had sat alone there were three comfortable imprints in the sand. These three could see from there to the pale shore

opposite with its peaceful abandoned farmhouses, and down along the bay to the white line of foam where the breakers rolled in over the sand-bar at the channel's mouth. They saw what the summer people and the whalers used to see. There was little change. As the three men had looked at these things their companions had hurried about around them.

The tide was in again now and had lopped off a generous slice of beach, but the strip left was pock-marked with footprints. There were layers of footprints: booted and bare, quick and emphatic. Most of them were pointed toward the bay and there was about them an air of urgency, of something that must be done, that could not wait.

Slowly the waves licked up the beach, and as they receded the sand was wet and smooth. In a day or so the footprints would be gone, quietly, without urgency, and for good.

AMONG RECENT BOOKS

DUDLEY FITTS:

ROBERT FITZGERALD: *A Wreath for the Sea.* Arrow Editions and New Directions.

Nine years ago Arrow Editions brought out Robert Fitzgerald's first book, *Poems.* It was not a showy book, or even a correct book—"correct" in the sense of that time, when the political-sociological attitudes of a Rukeyser or a Patchen were fashionable—, but it won something more than a *succès d'estime.* It was recognized, first of all, as being squarely in the classical tradition; but when one had said this, it was still necessary to take into account the extraordinary freshness of the writing, the vigor curbed by a feeling for form that never degenerated into formalism, the preoccupation with the ways and resources of language that managed, with an Empson's awareness, to avoid the Empsonian pitfalls of verbalism for its own sake. The range was small, but the work was that of a man in love with his craft and thoroughly a master of it. Now, with *A Wreath for the Sea,* Lieutenant Fitzgerald fulfils the promises made in *Poems* and makes perhaps as many more.

My mention of the classical tradition was intended to be taken literally. Fitzgerald's reputation as a classicist does not depend entirely upon his translations from Greek drama or upon such poems as "Himeros" and "Threnos" in his first book and "Latium," "Hellas," and the translations from Vergil and Catullus in *A Wreath.* Like the late John Peale Bishop, the most Roman in tone of any of our poets, he feels and writes in the Latin way even when his subject has nothing to do with antiquity. Latin, rather than Greek: the texture of the language is firm, close; the verses have a carved, almost tactile quality. William Rose Benét, in a recent notice of this book, speaks amiably and rather patronizingly of the benefits of an Irish Catholic training under the Jesuits. I should be the last to minimize its importance, but I do not believe that it explains this quality in Fitzgerald any more than it explains a comparable quality in Joyce. Something more profound than education is involved, something ancestral: call it *ipsissima Hibernicitas.* At any rate, it is the informing spirit of the best of the poems, and is present in all of them.

A glance at the avowedly "classical" pieces may help us in our consideration of the others. "Georgic," I suppose, may be called an exercise. If so, it is hardly primary, *pour les cinq doigts.* It is a more or less free translation of the greater part of the first book of Vergil's *Georgics,* that strange mixture of Old Farmer adages, practical agriculture, and applied astrology, culminating in

a tormentingly immediate vision of total war and a prayer to be delivered from destruction. Of all the problems that face the translator here, none is more troublesome than that presented by the elevation of Vergil's language. ("For my part," said Dryden on a similar occasion, "I am lost in the admiration of it; I contemn the world when I think on it, and myself when I translate it."*) Our language today is afraid of this particular kind of elevation, and Fitzgerald has wisely refrained from attempting, by archaizing, to recapture an antique tone. There is no rhetorical "glory." The pitch is deliberately low, the movement of the verse quiet. Nevertheless there is a very real tension, largely the result of the translator's insistence upon the root meaning of words; and it is so unobtrusively managed that the concluding prayer has an eloquence seemingly out of all proportion to the modest diction employed. Along the way there have been small triumphs of insight: "Jove . . . *knocked* honey from the leaves" (mellaque *decussit* foliis); *"frogs / inveterate* in their mud *croak a chorale"* (et *veterem* in limo ranae *cecinere querelam***); or

> And where the East exhales the yellow morning,
> Reddening evening lights her final stars,

for what must surely be the most beautiful couplet that Vergil ever composed:

> nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflavit anhelis,
> illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.

But the whole poem is a triumph of translation. In it, and in such similar though non-translated poems as the nakedly severe "Latium," are to be found the basic traits of Fitzgerald's style: a rigid discipline of language, both sonally and semantically, and a clear realization of imagery.

The latter quality, of course, was not allowed full play in the transation, although those inveterate frogs are an example of what I mean. One must turn elsewhere to find it at its most effective: in "Figures For an Advertisement," for example:

> And his beautiful daughters
> Sink in a circle of white skirts like daisies,
> Laughing for the brash photographer;

or in "Animula":

> The world of substance where I chuckled first,
> And goggled, balancing my enormous noddle—;

or in "In the Glass":

> Caught in the notch of the sights and held there,
> Screwed two points for wind: the frozen squirrel
> Knocked down, adorable, from the walnut bough;

or the whole of the poem called "Quo Dolore Contenebratum Est Cor Meum," where a boy's heartbroken response to his father's death is conveyed by a series of the simplest, homeliest images—toys, books, personal possessions, all the daily objects that suddenly become hugely and eternally significant in such a context. It is not always possible to explain why the effect is so rich. In the passage about the squirrel, quoted above, it is the word *adorable* that does it, for it is to be taken literally (the idea of immolation) as well as in its battered (Disney-cute) colloquial sense. In the "Animula" lines it is the combination of precision and caricature, plus the baby-talk sound-values, in "chuckled . . . goggled . . . noddle." But it is hard to say why the first passage is (for me, at any rate) so successful. The lines catch the pictorial moment; but they also release a variety of attitudes towards the moment—the summer-resort, the society page, the freshness (at once genuine and out-of-a-box) of the girls, the indefinite but unmistakable *timor-mortis* nostalgia

---

* Dedication of the *Aeneis* (1697).

** This is something more than a small triumph. *Inveterate* for *veterem,* transposing the adjective, involves a high pun; and it is interesting to note the similarity of consonant and vowel pattern between *croak a chorale* and *cecinere querelam.*

that is so characteristic of Fitzgerald's verse. So little is stated; so much is said. Which is one way of defining poetry.

This style is not always as cool and still as it is in the fragments which I have quoted, but it is always, at its best, under firm control. Fitzgerald can be as boisterous as you please: note the very Joycean "Portraits: II":

> To keep the Pentateuch unpent
> Or pig it on the whizzy door
> His tag was up, his kilter sent
> To be a junior editor,

and the swing band passage in "The Imprisoned." Occasionally, as in "Patruus" and the third poem of Section Four, strength of emotion gets out of hand—he does not rage well—and we get something like what the Elizabethans called "tearing the cat":

> Outstaring Furies in simple night: bastard of Night!

or

> You would not cover me over
> With the dropping indecent clods,
> You sanctimonious bastards: take
> Such of my hatred as is left
> When I have cursed the aspergent
> Water shaker with his stole, his
> Sotto voce Latin sing song . . .

Even when he is translating hate, as he does in his singularly feeble version of Catullus' *Furi et Aureli* ode, he manages to achieve only a rhetoric of hate—*vox et praeterea nihil.* And it is probable that these lapses are significant: it is as though there were something boiling and violent for which, so far, no adequate means of expression has been found, and which forces its way out in hysteria. The elegiac passages in "Ecce Abstulistis Hominem De Hac Vita" and "Et Quidquid Aspiciebam Mors Erat" and the incomparably lovely dirge, "Souls Lake," with which the fourth Section closes, indicate that Fitzgerald's mastery of poetry is lyric and contemplative, not dramatic. His concern is chiefly with "the remote / Population of memory": Latium; Heston; O'Rahilly; the croquet-lawn of a small town summer evening; "Terrible kids, / Katzenjammers"; the cassocked seminarist at handball in "the gritty cement courtyard"; Jack Wheelwright; the Helen after whom

> At the west gate the gaffers wheezed
> Their cricket whispers . . .

As he says of the Colorado mountains, in the last poem of this book:

> So at least I interpret the very thin hostile azure
> Wherein these stones are dipt, and I imagine
> Of time and the great dead, they too
> Correctly make a tune with me; let me
> Behold by their grave light my minuscule
> Part in the swaying and tranquil grandeur here.

A Wreath for the Sea is the memorable fulfilment of this prayer.

DAVID DAICHES:

THOMAS MANN: *Joseph the Provider.* Knopf.

This is the fourth and concluding volume of Thomas Mann's comic epic based on the Biblical story of Joseph. In the earlier sections it looked as though the work was developing into a great

anthropological fable, and we admired the skill with which Mann took the simple stories as told in the Bible and deftly circumvented chronology by expanding each incident into an illuminating chapter of a vast and timeless myth. This was a new way of throwing light on human psychology and behavior, and it was undertaken with a breadth of vision calculated to make the mere writer of historical novels look extremely petty.

This final volume, however, shows a certain change both in tone and scope. The historical narrative line is followed much more closely, the chronology is much more specific, and the comic element almost ousts the mythological and the symbolic. It is as though somebody had told Mann that he was becoming too pretentious for American readers, that the public was a little tired of hearing him acclaimed for his heavy profundity, and he accordingly decided to conclude his Joseph sequence with a volume that emphasized the comic and played down the epic element in the work.

At any rate, there is here a clearly perceptible change of treatment. In the introductory "Prelude in the Upper Circles" Mann indulges in a rather boisterous humor considerably removed from the subtler fun of the earlier sections. His treatment of Pharaoh and the Egyptian background is at the same time more simply historical and more ironical than his treatment of the pre-Egyptian scenes. This development was already noticeable in *Joseph in Egypt,* and perhaps it is attributable to the move from a less to a more documented civilization. We know a good deal more about Egyptian civilization of this period than we do of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their background, and it may be that in narrowing the scope of the work as it moves forward in time Mann is using a sort of funnel pattern in order to illustrate how behind history lies myth and behind myth lie all the great problems of anthropology. If we read the Joseph cycle this way, we can see it as a grand fable illustratitng the move from anthropology to history and, parallel with that, the development from mythology to fiction. But the fact remains that this final volume lacks the exciting sense of wandering to and fro in the psychology of ancient man which constituted one of the most notable qualities of *Joseph and His Brothers* and *Young Joseph.*

Joseph the Provider is nevertheless a remarkable work. The air of amused interest with which Mann brings to our attention the characters and actions of the principal actors, the note of tolerant understanding with which he describes the civilization of Egypt and its differences from that represented by Jacob and his sons, the remarkable presentation of Joseph as an intermediary between these two civilizations—these achievements show us Mann at his best and most characteristic. It is not the Mann of *Buddenbrooks* or *The Magic Mountain,* with his by now rather dated interest in problems of heredity and art, nor is it the garrulous philosopher of *The Beloved Returns:* it is a subtler and a wiser Mann, and the one who will be remembered longest.

Mann is at his best when he brings together two characters from utterly different backgrounds and steps back to observe the result. Joseph before Mai-Sachme, Joseph before Pharaoh, Jacob before Pharaoh—these scenes are presented not dramatically but thoughtfully, with a tranquil and luminous irony. At times the technique becomes almost that of the Platonic dialogue, but it never becomes merely the interchange of ideas; the sense of character and the sense of destiny always remain to provide tension. Only when Mann attempts to re-tell an incident which is told with superb simplicity in the Bible do we feel that he has a tendency to beat about the bush too much; as a rule we enjoy this beating about the bush as providing the essential flavor of the novel. Only once does the story really bog down—where the musical child Serah sings to Jacob the news of the survival of Joseph in the dullest doggerel. I have not seen the German text, and cannot tell whether the fault here is the translator's or the author's. For the most part (though there are some very noticeable exceptions) Mrs. Lowe-Porter has done what must have been an extraordinarily difficult job with remarkable success.

By and large, the Joseph saga is Mann's most remarkable work, the one which provides the most ample scope for his unusual talents. For essentially Mann is neither a chronicler nor a philosopher, but a fascinated and amused observer of the larger patterns of man's behavior. He was never happy in the role of sage and pundit which American opinion forced on him, and it is good to know that at this late stage in his career he has been able to invent a form of fiction in which, free of the pomposity he was expected to cultivate, he can combine history, fable and anthropology wtih wisdom, irony and humor.

JOSEPHINE MILES:

MURIEL RUKEYSER: *Beast in View.* Doubleday, Doran.
MARYA ZATURENSKA: *The Golden Mirror.* Macmillan.

The myth and the vision in both these titles characterize the poems the titles cover, and they are foreign to me. Without the beast vision or the mirror vision, I cannot feel at home in these poetries in what they share, the vivid image surface and its implications of emotional depth. The two levels are disturbingly separate.

Miss Zaturenska's title-poem begins:

> And you are startled when your reflected face
> In the full midstream of your sight becomes
> A mirror streaming back your secret light,
> All private meaning brought to public day,
> Your thoughts reflected in your eyes and brow,
> Your fate runs in your blood.

And Miss Rukeyser's:

> Configurations of time and singing
> Bring me to a dark harbor where
> The chase is drawn to a beginning
> And all the myths are gathered there.

Both of these texts, which I think are representative, seem to me to catch, suspend, examine animation; to illustrate rather than to speak. Much of the life of the poems is therefore not in voice or sentence, but in colorful reference. Qualities are inlaid, atmospheres are exclaimed, rooms are recreated, presences are evoked, by Miss Zaturenska, with a refined sensitive descriptive emphasis and formality. Qualities are outspread, passions are exclaimed, plazas are recreated, dreams of belief are evoked, more variously by Miss Rukeyser but with the same suspending descriptive emphasis. Both work in the phrasal sections, the participial constructions, the hovering symbolic implications, of an elaborately imaged world.

This is where I fail to be their best reader. I like a more sentential poetry, the overhearing of thought more in process, less in crystallization. When Miss Rukeyser writes, in her good sonnet "Who in One Lifetime," that

> She finds a pre-surrender on all sides:
> Treaty before the war, ritual impatience turn
> The camps of ambush to chambers of imagery. . . .

I agree too fully for her own meaning. I think, in fact, that the chambers of imagery themselves are ambush for our day, as they hold and bind too many meanings in suspended judgment.

Now, however, I would not wish to be an entirely bad reader for these two books of poems because they fill me often with admiration and sometimes with envy. In their own terms they are assured and skillful, and in their best terms they differ greatly. The poise of Miss Zaturenska's feeling is almost more than the words can sustain, but by her expert framing of the lines she keeps them constantly sustaining. They have a cut and facet.

> When you entered the threshold with no pomp,
> We saw the shadow of your aureole.
> But its reflection lit the waiting room,
> For a wonder's space, for a quick breath's flutter,
> *"Do you remember me?"*

or,

> Lost as that ring that on my finger sparkles,
> Hidden from all until my hand is lifted,
> So in a quiet light in light adoring
> My heart is lifted.

These lines, and many others, protect what they have to say with the tenderest care and authority. They are self-contained, yet always aware.

Both books are consistently expert; they do not waver from one tone to another or from one technique to another. What may be called the program poems, the personage ones of Miss Zaturenska and the Mexican ones of Miss Rukeyser, have not as much life for me as the more wayward lyrics, but are smoothly fashioned, and have in common their attention to evocative detail. The lyrics which have least in common I like the best. They take the expertness of the average and speak with it more directly, not differently but more intently, and so with most special tone. The tone of Miss Zaturenska's tense entrancement is clearest in "The Silent Day," "The Soundless Room," "The Companion," "The Eyes," "The Castaways."

Of Miss Rukeyser's tenser expectation the clearest tone to me is that of her own abstract responsibility.

> The bubbles in the blood sprang free,
> crying from roots, from Darwin's beard.
> The angel of the century
> stood on the night and would be heard;
> turned to my dream of tears and sang:
> Woman, American, and Jew,
> three guardians watch over you,
> three lions of heritage
> resist the evil of your age: . . .

This angel speaks out above the imageries of dream, the cave of Ajanta, and the drowned faces of the Elegies, with a belief and reliance powerful and moving. So it speaks in much of "Letter to the Front," especially VI, and in "The Key," and in Long Past Moncada," and notably "Love and Its Doors and Windows." In such poems, the formulae of sensation submit to a more forthright assertion, the poetry of picture breaks its trance and delivers its communication in person. These poems suggest the possibilities of angelic power, as Miss Zaturenska's the possibilities of dryadic grace, in poetry to come.

MARJORIE FARBER:

SAUL BELLOW: *The Dangling Man.* Vanguard.
ANNA SEGHERS: *Transit.* Little, Brown.
HARRY BROWN: *A Walk in the Sun.* Knopf.
F. C. WEISKOPF: *The Firing Squad.* Knopf.

Following what appears to be the final collapse of a century of political idealism, writers of the political Left have gone underground. Not to an exiles' common room—the loss of faith has been too thorough for that—but each to his individual cell, in the manner of Dostoievski's *Underground* man whose *Notes* begin:

> I am a sick man . . . I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man . . . However, I know nothing at all about my disease, and do not know for certain what ails me. I don't consult a doctor for it, though . . . I am extremely superstitious . . . No, I refuse to consult a doctor from spite.
> . . . I swear, gentlemen, that to be too conscious is an illness . . . It would have been enough to have the ordinary human consciousness, that is, half or a quarter of the amount which falls to the lot of a cultivated man of our unhappy nineteenth century, especially one who has the fatal ill-luck to inhabit Petersburg, the most theoretical and intentional town on the whole terrestrial globe . . . People do pride themselves on their diseases, and I do, it may be, more than any one . . . In consequence [of the inertia due to over-acute consciousness] one was not only unable to change but could do absolutely nothing. Thus it would follow . . . that one is not to blame in being a scoundrel; as though that were any consolation to the scoundrel . . .

Such an unconsoled scoundrel is Joseph, Saul Bellow's "Dangling Man," whose disease can be better understood in relation to *Notes from Underground* than in relation to those contemporary social conditions to which he himself attributes it. Joseph, too, keeps a journal; his Petersburg is a "six-sided box" in a Chicago rooming-house where he dangles between civilian life and the draft, quarreling progressively with his wife, brother, and friends of his business or Communist past, and devoting his last strength to the honest recording of his deterioration. But this is a different sort of honesty from Dostoievski's: *The Dangling Man* (originally entitled *Notes of a Dangling Man*) translates personal and emotional understanding into social and intellectual terms. Partly in spite of, and partly because of this typical preference, the book mirrors a new lost generation, probing its disillusion, hugging its betrayal—all with an inverted pride that might be termed the pride of the persecuted.

A comparison of the two books reveals many of the losses incurred by this generation when it substituted determinism for free-will, self-castigation for insight, and public morality for private morality. The Underground Man, relegating society's responsibility to a footnote, was able to understand the dialectics of his own sickness. He knew, for example, that while insulting his "superior" schoolfellows he yearned to embrace them; while loving the "inferior" prostitute he longed to punish her.

But Joseph is supported by righteousness when he rejects his friends, for they are not people: they are symbols of the commercial or political corruption against which it is his last, and only, duty to protect himself. And though he is impelled toward the evil odors of the semi-prostitute's flat, as antidote to his wife's Swedish-modern tastes, this relationship is queerly consummated by finding another man in possession of the bed, and by the vicarious imaginings which follow him down the peeling stairs (this is the finest scene in the book). Joseph understands neither the love underlying his hatreds, nor the revulsion underneath his attractions: his is the dilemma of a generation fascinated by Dostoievski but determined by Marx. Committed to understanding society in terms of his own sickness, he persists in understanding his sickness in terms of society.

> For we are all divorced from life [concludes Dostoievski], we are all cripples, every one of us, more or less . . . Why, we have come almost to looking upon real life as an effort . . . and are all privately agreed that it is better in books . . . Come, try, give any one of us a little more independence, untie our hands, widen the spheres of our activity, relax the control and we . . . should be begging to be under control again at once.

"Hurray for regular hours!" cries Joseph, liberated at last into the Army. "And for the supervision of the spirit! Long live regimentation!"

This is irony, not insight. Nevertheless it is the cry of a lost generation seeking its lost community; not the cry of an individual seeking his lost self. The same cry is heard from Anna Seghers' Kafkaesque refugee in the novel *Transit;* he, another ex-Communist, refuses to exchange the known perils of Marseilles for the unknown freedom of migration (Why "transfer from one lifeboat into another on the bottomless sea"?) Though his spiritual condition closely resembles Joseph's it is here attributed to the traumata of political activity, imprisonment and escape. The presence of shadows, rather than people, is natural to this psychic environment, which remains a consistent dream-world until the last two pages, with their polite insertion of a political message.

In contrast to the romantic self-examination of these two novels, Harry Brown's elegantly compressed account of an American platoon's first day in Italy shows an emerging classicism: the *New Yorker* story raised, with all its self-imposed limitations, to the level of art. If such polished realism leaves too little room for the uncouth details of imagination, Brown's craftsmanship almost makes up the lack. Reading this after Weiskopf's *Firing Squad* leads me to the unpopular belief that the American soldier is better off fighting without ideals—with nothing but a team loyalty and the American's highly developed sense of workmanship.

Weiskopf's novel is an admirable attempt, in traditional style, to trace the effect of complicity in Nazi guilt on varying sensibilities. Outside of the completely insensible—the hearty civilians, reminiscent of our Rotarians; the Hitler maidens, a terrifying breed of women; and the Party informer in each squad of soldiers—all of Weiskopf's Germans suffer from making war on

civilians. (However, this firing squad operates in Czechoslovakia, not in Steinbeck's Norway.) The effects are largely irritability (grousers are in constant danger of being reported), heavy drinking, increased brutality and the daily postponement of consciousness. Though there is one suicide due to the conflict between family and State loyalty, these conditions lead the sensitive to apathy, disillusionment, or breakdown, but not to desertion. This seems to me the most authentic conclusion of a very suggestive book.

CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL BARTLETT is co-editor of *Workshop,* a literary annual to begin in 1945, designed "to present a behind-the-scene view of writing and writers in the making." For information, address Mr. Bartlett at Apartado 14, Ciudad Guzman, Jalisco, Mexico.

ERIC RUSSELL BENTLEY has recently been awarded a Kenyon Review Fellowship. A portion of his book, *A Century of Hero-Worship,* was presented in ACCENT last winter.

Lt. HUBERT CREEKMORE, USNR, has been serving in the South Pacific. *The Stone Ants,* a collection of his poems, appeared in 1943.

DAVID DAICHES, now in the British Embassy in Washington, is the author of several critical works, the latest being *Virginia Woolf.*

MARJORIE FARBER has contributed poems and reviews to *Common Sense,* the *New Republic,* and the New York *Times.* She lives in Norfolk, Virginia.

DUDLEY FITTS, well known as poet, translator and editor, teaches at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

PRISCILLA FOLSOM lives in Clinton, Maine.

THE POETS OF THE YEAR SERIES

The best poetry in beautifully printed yet inexpensive editions

The Series for 1944:

THE HITLERIAD, A Verse Satire by *A. M. Klein.*

SELECTED POEMS of *Rafael Alberti.* English translations by Lloyd Mallan of a very important modern Spanish poet.

THE SOLDIER. A long poem by *Conrad Aiken.*

SELECTED POEMS of *Herman Melville.* With introduction by F. O. Matthiessen.

THIRTY POEMS by *Thomas Merton.* The lyrics of a young Trappist.

A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY OF MEXICAN POETS. Spanish and English.

☆ ☆

Each number produced at a different fine press. Available in two forms: as pamphlets at 50c each, or $2.50 for the series; as bound books at $1 each, $5 the set. Write for a free list of all titles available in the three earlier series.

published by NEW DIRECTIONS, 67 W. 44, NYC 18

WALLACE FOWLIE, author of *Clowns and Angels,* has written the present essay for *The Happy Rock—A Book about Henry Miller,* scheduled for February publication by Bern Porter, Berkeley, California.

DEAN JEFFRESS, a young California writer now serving in the Merchant Marine, has contributed recently to *Poetry.*

WELDON KEES' first book of poems, *The Last Man,* appeared a year ago. He lives in New York.

WILLIAM MARCH will soon offer a collection of fifty stories chosen from his various volumes of the last decade.

JOSEPHINE MILES, of the English Department at Berkeley, has published two books of poetry.

HENRY MILLER'S newest work in *Sunday After the War.*

JOHN NERBER has appeared in *Poetry* and other periodicals.

DAVID NEWTON, who is working in Washington, has contributed to *The Chimera.*

ROSEMARY PARIS is the wife of Arthur Mizener, the poet and critic. *Cross Section,* the Edwin Seaver anthology, presented her first published story.

KATHARINE SHATTUCK lives in Iowa City and has had stories in *American Prefaces,* ACCENT, etc.

WALLACE STEVENS, one of the most distinguished modern poets, lives in Hartford.

W. Y. TINDALL, of Columbia University, is the author of *D. H. Lawrence and Susan His Cow.*

NOTICE TO ACCENT READERS: Our supply of copies of three issues in Volume III—Winter, Spring, and Summer, 1943—is very limited. Since we wish to continue filling orders for all back issues, it would be appreciated if our readers who still have any of these copies but do not intend to keep them permanently would send them to us at once. We shall gladly pay 30c apiece for them, plus the cost of mailing. Kindly do not roll or fold them.

* a new book of vigorous & strikingly original verse . . .

"PREFACE TO MATURITY"

THE THIRD BOOK OF THE YOUNG CHICAGO POET

SELWYN S. SCHWARTZ

In "Preface to Maturity," the author of "The Poet in Blue Minor," and "Passages of Refuge," turns his fresh and provocative idiom to the dissection of our modern ills and sordid decay . . . however, the image is always intensely personal.

DeLuxe Edition

$2.50

AT YOUR BOOKSELLER OR:

The Publisher
THE PRESS OF JAMES A. DECKER
PRAIRIE CITY, ILLINOIS